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# In The Days of my Youth.

By The Author of Barbara's History.

# IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH.

VOL. II.

# IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH.

BY

AMELIA B. EDWARDS,

AUTHOR OF

"BARBARA'S HISTORY,"

&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1873.

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249. g. 371.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY MACDONALD AND TUGWELL,
BLENHEIM HOUSE.

# IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH.

## CHAPTER I.

*A dinner at the Maison Dorée, and an evening party in the Quartier Latin.*

THE most genial of companions was our new acquaintance, Franz Müller, the art-student. Light-hearted, buoyant, unassuming, he gave his animal spirits full play, and was the life of our little dinner. He had more natural gaiety than generally belongs to the German character, and his good-temper was inexhaustible. He enjoyed everything; he made the best of everything; he saw food for laughter in everything. He was always amused, and therefore was always amusing. Above all, there was a spontaneity in his mirth

which acted upon others as a perpetual stimulant. He was in short, what the French call a *bon garçon*, and the English a capital fellow; easy without assurance, comic without vulgarity, and, as Sydney Smith wittily hath it—"a great number of other things without a great number of other things."

Upon Dalrymple, who had been all day silent, abstracted, and unlike his usual self, this joyous influence acted like a tonic. As entertainer, he was bound to exert himself, and the exertion did him good. He threw off his melancholy; and with the help, possibly, of somewhat more than his usual quantity of wine, entered thoroughly into the passing joyousness of the hour. What a *recherché*, luxurious extravagant little dinner it was, that evening at the Maison Dorée! We had a charming little room overlooking the Boulevard, furnished with as much looking-glass, crimson velvet, gilding, and arabesque painting as could be got together within the space of twelve feet by eight.

Our wine came to table in a silver cooler that Cellini might have wrought. Our meats were served upon porcelain that would have driven Palissy to despair. We had nothing that was in season, except game, and everything that was out; which, by-the-way, appears to be our modern criterion of excellence with respect to a dinner. Finally, we were waited upon by the most imposing of waiters—a waiter whose imperturbable gravity was not to be shaken by any amount of provocation, and whose neckcloth alone was sufficient to qualify him for the church.

How merry we were! How Müller tormented that diplomatic waiter! What stories we told! what puns we made! What brilliant things we said, or fancied we said, over our Chambertin and Johannisberger! Müller knew nothing of the substratum of sadness underlying all that jollity. He little thought how heavy Dalrymple's strong heart had been that morning. He had no idea that my friend and I were to part on the morrow,

for months or years, as the case might be—he to carry his unrest hither and thither through distant lands; I to remain alone in a strange city, pursuing a distasteful study, and toiling onward to a future without fascination or hope. But, as the glass seals tell us, "such is life." We are all mysteries to one another. The pleasant fellow whom I invite to dinner because he amuses me, carries a scar on his soul which it would frighten me to see; and he in turn, when he praises my claret, little dreams of the carking care that poisons it upon my palate, and robs it of all its aroma. Perhaps the laughter-loving painter himself had his own little tragedy locked up in some secret corner of the heart that seemed to beat so lightly under that braided blouse of Palais Royale cut and Quartier Latin fashion! Who could tell? And of what use would it be, if it were told? Smiles carry one through the world more agreeably than tears, and if the skeleton is only kept decently out of sight in its own unsuspected closet, so much

the better for you, and me, and society at large.

Dinner over, and the serious waiter dismissed with the dessert and the empty bottles, we sat by the open window for a long time, sipping our coffee, smoking our cigars, and watching the busy life of the Boulevard below. There the shops were all alight and the passers-by more numerous than by day. Carriages were dashing along, full of opera-goers and ball-room beauties. On the pavement just under our window were seated the usual crowd of Boulevard idlers, sipping their *al fresco* absinthe, and *grog-au-vin.* In the very next room, divided from us by only a slender partition, was a noisy party of young men and girls. We could hear their bursts of merriment, the chinking of their glasses as they pledged one another, the popping of the champagne corks, and almost the very jests that passed from lip to lip. Presently a band came and played at the corner of an adjoining street. All was mirth, all was life, all was amusement and

dissipation both in-doors and out-of-doors, in the "care-charming" city of Paris on that pleasant September night; and we, of course, were gay and noisy, like our neighbours. Dalrymple and Müller could scarcely be called new acquaintances. They had met some few times at the *Chicards*, and also, some years before, in Rome. What stories they told of artists whom they had known! What fun they made of Academic dons and grave professors high in authority! What pictures they drew, of life in Rome—in Vienna—in Paris! Though we had no ladies of our party and were only three in number, I am not sure that the merry-makers in the next room laughed any louder or oftener than we!

At length the clock on the mantelpiece warned us that it was already half-past nine, and that we had been three hours at dinner. It was clearly time to vary the evening's amusement in some way or other, and the only question was what next to do? Should we go to a billiard-room? Or to the Salle

Valentinois? Or to some of the cheap theatres on the Boulevard du Temple? Or to the Tableaux Vivants? Or the Café des Aveugles? Or take a drive round by the Champs Elysèes in an open fly?

At length Müller remembered that some fellow-students were giving a party that evening, and offered to introduce us.

"It is up five pairs of stairs, in the Quartier Latin," said he; "but thoroughly jolly—all students and grisettes. They'll be delighted to see us."

This admirable proposition was no sooner made than acted upon; so we started immediately, and Dalrymple, who seemed to be well acquainted with the usages of student-life, proposed that we should take with us a store of sweetmeats for the ladies.

"There subsists," observed he, "a mysterious elective affinity between the grisette and the chocolate bon-bon. He who can skilfully exhibit the latter, is almost certain to win the heart of the former. Where the

chocolate fails, however, the *marron glacé* is an infallible specific. I recommend that we lay in a liberal supply of both weapons."

"Carried by acclamation," said Müller. "We can buy them on our way, in the Rue Vivienne. A capital shop; but one that I never patronise—they give no credit."

Chatting thus, and laughing, we made our way across the Boulevard and through a net-work of by-streets into the Rue Vivienne, where we laid siege to a great bon-bon shop —a gigantic depôt for dyspepsia at so much per kilogramme—and there filled our pockets with sweets of every imaginable flavour and colour. This done, a cab conveyed us in something less than ten minutes across the Pont Neuf to the Quartier Latin.

Müller's friends were three in number, and all students—one of art, one of law, and one of medicine. They lodged at the top of a dingy house near the Odéon, and being very great friends and very near neighbours, were giving this entertainment conjointly. Their names were Gustave,

Jules, and Adrien. Adrien was the artist, and lived in the garret, just over the heads of Gustave and Jules, which made it very convenient for a party, and placed a *suite* of rooms at the disposal of their visitors.

Long before we had achieved the five pairs of stairs, we heard the sound of voices and the scraping of a violin, and on the fifth landing were received by a pretty young lady in a coquettish little cap, whom Müller familiarly addressed as Annette, and who piloted us into a very small bed-room which was already full of hats and coats, bonnets, shawls, and umbrellas. Having added our own paletôts and beavers to the general stock, and having each received a little bit of pasteboard in exchange for the same, we were shown into the ball-room by Mademoiselle Annette, who appeared to fill the position of hostess, usher, and general superintendent.

It was a good-sized room, somewhat low in the ceiling, and brilliantly lighted with lots of tallow candles in bottles. The furni-

ture had all been cleared out for the dancers, except a row of benches round the walls, and a chest of drawers in a recess between the windows which served as a raised platform for the orchestra. The said orchestra consisted of a violin and accordion, both played by amateurs, with an occasional *obligato* on the common comb. As for the guests, they were, as Müller had already told us, all students and grisettes—the former wearing every strange variety of beard and blouse; the latter in pretty light-coloured muslins and bewitching little caps, with the exception of two who wore flowers in their hair, and belonged to the opera ballet. They were in the midst of a tremendous galop when we arrived; so we stood at the door and looked on, and Dalrymple flirted with Mademoiselle Annette. As soon as the galop was over, two of our hosts came forward to welcome us.

"The Duke of Dalrymple and the Marquis of Arbuthnot—Messieurs Jules Charpentier and Gustave Dubois," said Müller, with the most *dégagé* air in the world.

Monsieur Jules, a tall young man with an enormous false nose of the regular carnival pattern, and Monsieur Gustave, who was short and stout, with a visible high-water mark round his throat and wrists, and curious leather mosaics in his boots, received us very cordially, and did not appear to be in the least surprised at the magnificence of the introduction. On the contrary, they shook hands with us; apologised for the absence of Adrien, who was preparing the supper upstairs; and offered to find us partners for the next valse. Dalrymple immediately proposed for the hand of Mademoiselle Annette. Müller, declining adventitious aid, wandered among the ladies, making himself universally agreeable and trusting for a partner to his own unassisted efforts. For myself, I was indebted to Monsieur Gustave for an introduction to a very charming young lady whose name was Josephine, and with whom I fell over head and ears in love without a moment's warning.

She was somewhat under the middle height, slender, supple, rosy-lipped, and

coquettish to distraction. Her pretty mouth dimpled round with smiles at every word it uttered. Her very eyes laughed. Her hair, which was more adorned than concealed by a tiny muslin cap that clung by some unseen agency to the back of her head, was of a soft, warm, wavy brown, with a woof of gold threading it here and there. Her voice was, perhaps, a little loud; her conversation rather childish; her accent such as would scarcely have passed current in the Faubourg St. Germain—but what of that? One would be worse than foolish to expect style and cultivation in a grisette; and had I not had enough to disgust me with both in Madame de Marignan? What more charming, after all, than youth, beauty, and light-heartedness? Were Noel and Chapsal of any importance to a mouth that could not speak without such a smile as Hebe might have envied?

I was, at all events, in no mood to take exception to these little defects. I am not sure that I did not even regard them in the light of additional attractions. That which

in another I should have called *bête*, I set down to the score of *naïveté* in Mademoiselle Josephine. One is not difficult at twenty—by the way, I was now twenty-one—especially after dining at the Maison Dorée.

Mademoiselle Josephine was frankness itself. Before I had enjoyed the pleasure of her acquaintance for ten minutes, she told me she was an artificial florist: that her *patronne* lived in the Rue Menilmontant; that she went to her work every morning at nine, and left it every evening at eight; that she lodged *sous les toits* at No 70, Rue Aubry-le-Boucher; that her relations lived at Juvisy; and that she went to see them now and then on Sundays, when the weather and her funds permitted.

"Is the country pretty at Juvisy, Mademoiselle?" I asked, by way of keeping up the conversation.

"Oh, M'sieur, it is a real paradise. There are trees, and fields, and there is the Seine close by, and a chateau, and a park, and a church on a hill .... *ma foi!* there is no-

thing in Paris half so pretty; not even the Jardin des Plantes!"

"And have you been there lately?"

"Not for eight weeks, at the very least, M'sieur. But then it costs three francs and a half for the return ticket, and since I quarrelled with Emile . . . ."

"Emile!" said I, quickly. "Who is he?"

"He is a picture-frame maker, M'sieur, and works for a great dealer in the Rue du Faubourg Montmartre. He was my sweetheart, and he took me out somewhere every Sunday, till we quarrelled."

"And what did you quarrel about, Mademoiselle?"

My pretty partner laughed and tossed her head.

"Eh, *mon Dieu*! he was jealous."

"Jealous of whom?"

"Of a gentleman—an artist—who wanted to paint me in one of his pictures. Emile did not like me to go to his *atelier* so often; and the gentleman gave me a shawl (such a

pretty shawl!) and a canary in a lovely green and gold cage; and . . . ."

"And Emile objected?"

"Yes, M'sieur."

"How very unreasonable!"

"That's just what I said, M'sieur."

"And have you never seen him since?"

"Oh, yes—he keeps company now with my cousin Cecile, and she humours him in everything."

"And the artist—what of him, Mademoiselle?"

"Oh, I sat to him every day, till his picture was finished. *Il était bien gentil.* He took me to the theatre several times, and once to a fête at Versailles; but that was after Emile and I had broken it off."

"Did you find it tiresome, sitting as a model?"

"*Mais, comme ci, et comme ça!* It was a beautiful dress, and became me wonderfully. To be sure, it was rather cold!"

"May I ask what character you were supposed to represent, Mademoiselle?"

"He said it was Phryne. I have no idea who she was; but I think she must have found it very uncomfortable if she always wore sandals, and went without stockings."

I looked down at her little foot, and thought how pretty it must have looked in the Greek sandal. I pictured her to myself in the graceful Greek robe, with a chalice in her hand and her temples crowned with flowers. What a delicious Phryne! And what a happy fellow Praxiteles must have been!

"It was a privilege, Mademoiselle, to be allowed to see you in so charming a costume," I said, pressing her hand tenderly. "I envy that artist from the bottom of my heart."

Mademoiselle Josephine smiled, and returned the pressure.

"One might borrow it," said she, "for the Bal de l'Opera."

"Ah, Mademoiselle, if I dared only aspire to the honour of conducting you!"

"*Dâme*! it is nearly four months to come!"

"True, but in the meantime, Mademoiselle——"

"In the meantime," said the fair Josephine, anticipating my hopes with all the unembarrassed straightforwardness imaginable, "I shall be delighted to improve M'sieur's acquaintance."

"Mademoiselle, you make me happy!"

"Besides, M'sieur is an Englishman, and I like the English so much!"

"I am delighted to hear it, Mademoiselle. I hope I shall never give you cause to alter your opinion."

"Last galop before supper!" shouted Monsieur Jules through a brass speaking-trumpet, in order to make use of which he was obliged to hold up his nose with one hand. "Gentlemen, choose your partners. All couples to dance till they drop!"

There were a dozen up immediately, amongst whom Dalrymple and Mademoiselle Annette, and Müller with one of the ballet ladies, were the first to start. As for Josephine, she proved to be a damsel of forty-galop power. She never wanted to

rest, and she never cared to leave off. She did not even look warm when it was over. I wonder to this day how it was that I did not die on the spot.

When the galop was ended, we all went upstairs to Monsieur Adrien's garret, where Monsieur Adrien, who had red hair and wore glasses, received us in person, and made us welcome. Here we found the supper elegantly laid out on two doors which had been taken off their hinges for the purpose; but which, being supported from beneath on divers boxes and chairs of unequal heights, presented a painfully sloping surface, thereby causing the jellies to look like leaning towers of Pisa, and the sponge-cake (which was already professedly tipsy) to assume an air so unbecomingly convivial that it might almost have been called drunk.

Nobody thought of sitting down, and, if they did, there were no means of doing so; for Monsieur Adrien's garret was none of the largest, and, as in a small villa residence we sometimes see the whole house sacrificed to

a winding staircase, so in this instance had the whole room been sacrificed to the splendour of the supper. For the inconvenience of standing, we were compensated, however, by the abundance and excellence of the fare. There were cold chickens, meat pies, dishes of sliced ham, pyramids of little Bologna sausages, huge rolls of bread a yard in length, lobster salad, and cold punch in abundance.

The flirtations at supper were tremendous. In a bachelor establishment one cannot expect to find every convenience, and on this occasion the prevailing deficiencies were among the plates and glasses; so those who had been partners in the dance now became partners in other matters, eating off the same plate and drinking out of the same tumbler; but this only made it so much the merrier. By and by somebody volunteered a song, and somebody else made a speech, and then we went down again to the ball-room, and dancing recommenced.

The laughter now became louder, and the

legs of the guests more vigorous than ever. The orchestra, too, received an addition to its strength in the person of a gentleman who, having drunk more cold punch than was quite consistent with the preservation of his equilibrium, was still sober enough to oblige us with a spirited accompaniment on the shovel and tongs, which, with the violin and accordion, and the comb *obligato* before mentioned, produced a startling effect, and reminded one of Turkish marches, Pantomime overtures, and the like barbaric music.

In the midst of the first polka, however, we were interrupted by a succession of furious double knocks on the floor beneath our feet. We stopped by involuntary consent—dancers, musicians, and all.

"It's our neighbour on the storey below," said Monsieur Jules. "He objects to the dancing."

"Then we'll dance a little heavier, to teach him better taste," said a student, who had so little hair on his head and so much on his chin, that he looked as if his face had been

turned upside down. "What is the name of the ridiculous monster?"

"Monsieur Bobinet."

"Ladies and gentlemen, let us dance for the edification of Monsieur Bobinet! Orchestra, strike up, in honour of Monsieur Bobinet! One, two, three, and away!"

Hereupon we uttered a general hurrah, and dashed off again, like a herd of young elephants. The knocking ceased, and we thought that Monsieur Bobinet had resigned himself to his fate, when, just as the Polka ended and the dancers were promenading noisily round and round the room, the bombardment began afresh; and this time against the very door of the ball-room.

"*Par exemple*!" cried Monsieur Jules. "The enemy dares to attack us in our own lines!"

"Bolt the door, and let him knock till he's tired," suggested one.

"Open it suddenly, and deluge him with water!" cried another.

"Tar and feather him!" proposed a third.

In the meantime, Monsieur Bobinet, happily ignorant of these agreeable schemes for his reception, continued to thunder away upon the outer panels, accompanying the raps with occasional loud coughs, and hems, and stampings of the feet.

"Hush! do nothing violent," cried Müller, scenting a practical joke. "Let us invite him in, and make fun of him. It will be ever so much more amusing!"

And with this he drove the rest somewhat back and threw open the door, upon the outer threshold of which, with a stick in one hand and a bedroom candle in the other, and a flowered dressing-gown tied round his ample waist by a cord and tassels, stood Monsieur Bobinet.

Müller received him with a profound bow, and said—

"Monsieur Bobinet, I believe?"

Monsieur Bobinet, who was very bald, very cross, and very stout, cast an irritable glance into the room; but, seeing so many people, drew back and said:—

"Yes, that is my name, Monsieur. I lodge on the fourth floor . . ."

"But pray walk in, Monsieur Bobinet," said Müller, opening the door still wider and bowing still more profoundly.

"Monsieur," returned the fourth-floor lodger, "I—I only come to complain . . . ."

"Whatever the occasion of this honour, Monsieur," pursued the student, with increasing politeness, "we cannot suffer you to remain on the landing. Pray do us the favour to walk in."

"Oh, walk in—pray walk in, Monsieur Bobinet," echoed Jules, Gustave, and Adrien, all together.

The fourth-floor lodger hesitated; took a step forward; thought, perhaps, that, since we were all so polite, he would do his best to conciliate us; and, glancing down nervously at his dressing-gown and slippers, said:—

"Really, gentlemen, I should have much pleasure, but I am not prepared . . ."

"Don't mention it, Monsieur Bobinet,"

said Müller. "We are delighted to receive you. Allow me to disembarrass you of your candle."

"And permit me," said Jules, "to relieve you of your stick."

"Pray, Monsieur Bobinet, do you never dance the polka?" asked Gustave.

"Bring Monsieur Bobinet a glass of cold punch," said Adrien.

"And a plate of lobster salad," added the bearded student.

Monsieur Bobinet, finding the door already closed behind him, looked round nervously; but encountering only polite and smiling faces, endeavoured to seem at his ease, and to put a good face upon the matter.

"Indeed, gentlemen, I must beg you to excuse me," said he. "I never drink at night, and I never eat suppers. I only came to request . . ."

"Nay, Monsieur Bobinet, we cannot suffer you to leave us without taking a glass of cold punch," pursued Müller.

"Upon my word," began the lodger, "I dare not . . ."

"A glass of white wine, then?"

"Or a cup of coffee?"

"Or some home-made lemonade?"

Monsieur Bobinet cast a look of helpless longing towards the door.

"If you really insist, gentlemen," said he, "I will take a cup of coffee; but indeed . . ."

"A cup of coffee for Monsieur Bobinet!" shouted Müller.

"A large cup of coffee for Monsieur Bobinet!" repeated Jules.

"A strong cup of coffee for Monsieur Bobinet!" cried Gustave, following up the lead of the other two.

The fourth-floor lodger frowned and coloured up, beginning to be suspicious of mischief. Seeing this, Müller hastened to apologise.

"You must pardon us, Monsieur Bobinet," he said with the most winning amiability, "if we are all in unusually high

spirits to-night. You are not aware, perhaps, that our friend Monsieur Jules Charpentier was married this morning, and that we are here in celebration of that happy event. Allow me to introduce you to the bride."

And turning to one of the ballet ladies, he led her forward with exceeding gravity, and presented her to Monsieur Bobinet as Madame Charpentier.

The fourth-floor lodger bowed, and went through the usual congratulations. In the meantime, some of the others had prepared a mock sofa by means of two chairs set somewhat wide apart, with a shawl thrown over the whole to conceal the space between. Upon one of these chairs sat a certain young lady named Louise, and upon the other Mam'selle Josephine. As soon as it was ready, Müller, who had been only waiting for it, affected to observe for the first time that Monsieur Bobinet was still standing.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he exclaimed, "has no one offered our visitor a chair? Monsieur Bobinet, I beg a thousand pardons. Pray

do us the favour to be seated. Your coffee will be here immediately, and these ladies on the sofa will be delighted to make room for you!"

"Oh yes, pray be seated, Monsieur Bobinet," cried the two girls. "We shall be charmed to make room for Monsieur Bobinet!"

More than ever confused and uncomfortable, poor Monsieur Bobinet bowed; sat down upon the treacherous space between the two chairs; went through immediately; and presented the soles of his slippers to the company in the least picturesque manner imaginable. This involuntary performance was greeted with a shout of wild delight.

"Bravo, Monsieur Bobinet!"

"*Vive* Monsieur Bobinet!"

"Three cheers for Monsieur Bobinet!"

Scarlet with rage, the fourth-floor lodger sprang to his feet and made a rush to the door; but he was hemmed in immediately. In vain he stormed; in vain he swore. We joined hands; we called for music; we

danced round him; we sang; and at last, having fairly bumped and thumped and hustled him till we were tired, pushed him out on the landing, and left him to his fate.

After this interlude, the mirth grew fast and furious. Valse succeeded valse, and galop followed galop, till the orchestra declared they could play no longer, and the gentleman with the shovel and tongs collapsed in a corner of the room and went to sleep with his head in the coal-scuttle. Then the ballet-ladies were prevailed upon to favour us with a *pas de deux;* after which Müller sang a comic song with a chorus, in which everybody joined; and then the orchestra was bribed with hot brandy-and-water, and dancing commenced again. By this time the visitors began to drop away in two and threes, and even the fair Josephine, to whom I had never ceased paying the most devoted attention, declared she could not stir another step. As for Dalrymple, he had disappeared during supper, without a word of leave-taking to anyone.

Matters being at this pass, I looked at my watch, and found that it was already half-past six o'clock; so having bade good-night, or rather good-morning, to Messieurs Jules, Gustave, and Adrien, and having, with great difficulty, discovered my own coat and hat among the miscellaneous collection in the adjoining bed-room, I prepared to escort Mademoiselle Josephine to her home.

"Going already?" said Müller, encountering us on the landing, with a roll in one hand and a Bologna sausage in the other.

"Already! Why, my dear fellow, it is nearly seven o'clock!"

"*Qu' importe?* Come up to the supper-room and have some breakfast!"

"Not for the world!"

"Well, *chacun à son goût.* I am as hungry as a hunter."

"Can I not take you any part of your way?"

"No, thank you. I am a Quartier Latinist, *pur sang*, and lodge only a street

or two off. Stay, here is my address. Come and see me—you can't think how glad I shall be!"

"Indeed, I will come—and here is my card in exchange. Good-night, Herr Müller."

"Good-night, Marquis of Arbuthnot. Mademoiselle Josephine, *au plaisir*."

So we shook hands and parted, and I saw my innamorata home to her residence at No. 70, Rue Aubry le Boucher which opened upon the Marché des Innocents. She fell asleep upon my shoulder in the cab, and was only just sufficiently awake when I left her, to accept all the *marrons glacés* that yet remained in the pockets of my paletôt, and to remind me that I had promised to take her out next Sunday for a drive in the country, and a dinner at the Moulin Rouge.

The fountain in the middle of the Marché was now sparkling in the sunshine like a shower of diamonds, and the business of the market was already at its height. The shops in the neighbouring streets

were opening fast. The "iron tongue" of St. Eustache was calling the devout to early prayer. Fagged as I was, I felt that a walk through the fresh air would do me good; so I dismissed the cab, and reached my lodgings just as the sleepy *conçierge* had turned out to sweep the hall, and open the establishment for the day. When I came down again two hours later, after a nap and a bath, I found a *commissioniare* waiting for me.

"*Tiens!*" said Madame Bouïsse (Madame Bouïsse was the wife of the *conçierge*) "*V'la!* here is M'sieur Arbuthnot."

The man touched his cap, and handed me a letter.

"I was told to deliver it into no hands but those of M'sieur himself," said he.

The address was in Dalrymple's writing. I tore the envelope open. It contained only a card, on the back of which, scrawled hastily in pencil, were the following words:

"To have said good-bye would have made our parting none the lighter. By the time you decipher this hieroglyphic, I shall be

some miles on my way. Address Hotel de Russie, Berlin. Adieu, Damon; God bless you. O. D."

"How long is it since this letter was given to you?" said I, without taking my eyes from the card.

The *commissionaire* made no reply. I repeated the question, looked up impatiently, and found that the man was already gone.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Chateau de Sainte Aulaire.*

"Mark yon old mansion frowning thro' the trees,
Whose hollow turret wooes the whistling breeze."

MY acquaintance with Mademoiselle Josephine progressed rapidly; although, to confess the truth, I soon found myself much less deeply in love than I had at first supposed. For this disenchantment, fate and myself were alone to blame. It was not her fault if I had invested her with a thousand imaginary perfections; nor mine if the spell was broken as soon as I discovered my mistake.

Too impatient to wait till Sunday, I made my way on Saturday afternoon to Rue Aubry-le-Boucher. I persuaded myself that I was bound to call on her, in order to conclude our arrangements for the following day. At

all events, I argued, she might forget the engagement, or believe that I had forgotten it. So I went, taking with me a magnificent bouquet and an embroidered satin bag full of *marrons glacés*.

My divinity lived, as she had told me, *sous les toits*—and *sous les toits*, up seven flights of very steep and dirty stairs, I found her. It was a large attic with a sloping roof, overlooking a bristling expanse of chimney-pots, and commanding the twin towers of Notre Dame. There were some coloured prints of battles and shipwrecks wafered to the walls; a couple of flowerpots in the narrow space between the windowledge and the coping outside; a dingy canary in a wire cage; a rival mechanical cuckoo in a Dutch clock in the corner; a little bed with striped hangings; a rush-bottomed *prie-dieu* chair in front of a plain black crucifix, over which drooped a faded branch of consecrated palm; and some few articles of household furniture of the humblest description. In all this, there was nothing vulgar. Under other circumstances, I might, perhaps, have even elicited

somewhat of grace and poetry from these simple materials. But conceive what it was to see them through an atmosphere of warm white steam that left an objectionable clamminess on the backs of the chairs and caused even the door-handle to burst into a tepid perspiration. Conceive what it was to behold my adored one standing in the middle of the room, up to her elbows in soap-suds, washing out the very dress in which she was to appear on the morrow... Good taste defend us! Could anything be more cruelly calculated to disturb the tender tenor of a lover's dreams? Fancy what Leander would have felt, if, after swimming across the Hellespont, he had surprised Hero at the washing-tub! Imagine Romeo's feelings, if he had scaled the orchard walls only to find Juliet helping to hang out the family linen!

The worst of it was that my lovely Josephine was not in the least embarrassed. She evidently regarded the washing-tub as a desirable piece of furniture, and was not even conscious that the act of "soaping in" was an unromantic occupation!

Such was the severity of this first blow that I pleaded an engagement, presented my offerings (how dreadfully inappropriate they seemed!), and hurried away to a lecture on *materia medica* at the *École Pratique*; that being a good, congenial, dismal entertainment for the evening!

Sunday came with the sunrise, and at midday, true as the clock of St. Eustache, I knocked once more at the door of the *mansarde* where my Josephine dwelt. This time, my visit being anticipated, I found her dressed to receive me. She looked more fresh and charming than ever; and the lilac muslin which I had seen in the washing-tub some eighteen or twenty hours before, became her to perfection. So did her pretty green shawl, pinned closely at the throat and worn as only a Frenchwoman would have known how to wear it. So did the white camelia and the moss-rose buds which she had taken out of my bouquet, and fastened at her waist.

What I was not prepared for, however, was her cap. I had forgotten that your

Parisian grisette* would no more dream of wearing a bonnet than of crowning her head with feathers and adorning her countenance with war-paint. It had totally escaped me that I, a bashful Englishman of twenty-one, nervously sensitive to ridicule and gifted by nature with but little of the spirit of social defiance, must in broad daylight make my appearance in the streets of Paris, accompanied by a bonnetless grisette! What should I do, if I met Dr. Cheron? or Madame de Courcelles? or, worse than all, Madame de Marignan? My obvious resource was to take her in whatever direction we should be least likely to meet any of my acquaintances. Where, oh fate! might that obscurity be found which had suddenly become the dearest object of my desires?

"*Eh bien*, Monsieur Basil," said Josephine, when my first compliments had been paid. "I am quite ready. Where are we going?"

* The grisette of twenty years ago, *bien entendu*. I am writing, be it remembered, of "The days of my youth."

"We shall dine, *ma chère ange*," said I, absently, "at—let me see—at . . . ."

"At the Moulin Rouge," interrupted she. "But that is six hours to come. In the meantime——"

"In the meantime? Ay, in the meantime . . . . what a delightful day for the time of year!"

"Shall it be Versailles?" suggested Josephine.

"Heaven forbid!"

Josephine opened her large eyes.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said she. "What is there so very dreadful in Versailles?"

I made no reply. I was passing all the suburbs in review before my mind's eye,—Bellevue, Enghien, Fontenay aux Roses, St. Germains, Sceaux; even Fontainebleau and Compiègne.

The grisette pouted, and glanced at the clock.

"If Monsieur is as slow to start as he is to answer," said she, "we shall not get beyond the barriers to-day."

At this moment, I remembered to have

heard of Montlhéry as a place where there was a forest and a feudal ruin; also, which was more to the purpose, as lying at least six and twenty miles south of Paris."

"My dear Mademoiselle Josephine," I said, "forgive me. I have planned an excursion which I am sure will please you infinitely better than a mere common-place trip to Versailles. Versailles, on Sunday, is vulgar. You have heard, of course, of Montlhéry—one of the most interesting places near Paris."

"I have read a romance called *The Tower of Montlhéry*," said Josephine.

"And that tower—that historical and interesting tower—is still standing! How delightful to wander among the ruins—to recall the stirring events which caused it to be besieged in the reign of—of either Louis the Eleventh, or Louis the Fourteenth; I don't remember which, and it doesn't signify—to explore the picturesque village, and ramble through the adjoining woods of St. Genevieve—to visit . . ."

"I wonder if we shall find any donkeys

to ride," interrupted Josephine, upon whom my eloquence was taking the desired effect.

"Donkeys!" I exclaimed, drawing, I am ashamed to say, upon my imagination. "Of course—hundreds of them!"

"*Ah, ça!* Then the sooner we go the better. Stay, I must just lock my door, and leave word with my neighbour on the next floor that I am gone out for the day."

So she locked the door and left the message, and we started. I was fortunate enough to find a close cab at the corner of the *marché*—she would have preferred an open one, but I overruled that objection on the score of time—and before very long we were seated in the cushioned fauteuils of a first-class compartment on the Orleans Railway, and speeding away towards Montlhéry.

It was with no trifling sense of relief that I found the place really picturesque, when we arrived. We had, it is true, to put up with a comfortless drive of three or four miles in a primitive, jolting, yellow omnibus, which crawled at stated hours of the day between the town and the station; but that

was a minor evil, and we made the best of it. First of all, we strolled through the village—the clean, white, sunny village, where the people were sitting outside their doors playing at dominoes, and the cocks and hens were walking about like privileged inhabitants of the market-place. Then we had luncheon at the *auberge* of the "Lion d'Or." Then we looked in at the little church (still smelling of incense from the last service) with its curious old altar-piece and monumental brasses. Then we peeped through the iron gate of the melancholy *cimetière*, which was full of black crosses and wreaths of *immortelles*. Last of all, we went to see the ruin, which stood on the summit of a steep and solitary rock in the midst of a vast level plain. It proved to be a round keep of gigantic strength and height, approached by two courtyards and surrounded by the weed-grown and fragmentary traces of an extensive stronghold, nothing of which now remained save a few broken walls, three or four embrasured loopholes, an ancient well of incalculable depth, and the

rusted teeth of a formidable portcullis. Here we paused awhile to rest and admire the view; while Josephine, pleased as a child on a holiday, flung pebbles into the well, ate sugar-plums, and amused herself with my pocket-telescope.

"*Regardez!*" she cried, "there is the dome of the Pantheon. I am sure it is the Pantheon—and to the right, far away, I see a town!—little white houses, and a steeple. And there goes a steamer on the river—and there is the railway and the railway station, and the long road by which we came in the omnibus. Oh, how nice it is, Monsieur Basil, to look through a telescope!"

"Do me the favour, *ma belle*, to accept it —for my sake," said I, thankful to find her so easily entertained. I was lying in a shady angle of old wall, puffing away at a cigar, with my hat over my eyes and the soles of my boots levelled at the view. It is difficult to smoke and make love at the same time; and I preferred the tobacco.

Josephine was enchanted, and thanked me in a thousand pretty, foolish phrases.

She declared she saw ever so much farther and clearer with the glass, now that it was her own. She looked at me through it, and insisted that I should look at her. She picked out all sorts of marvellous objects, at all sorts of incredible distances. In short, she prattled and chattered till I forgot all about the washing-tub, and again began to think her quite charming. Presently we heard wandering sounds of music among the trees at the foot of the hill—sounds as of a violin and bagpipes; now coming with the wind from the west, now dying away to the north, now bursting out afresh more merrily than ever, and leading off towards the village.

"*Tiens!* that must be a wedding!" said Josephine, drumming with her little feet against the side of the old well on which she was sitting.

"A wedding! what connection subsists, pray, between the bonds of matrimony, and a tune on the bagpipes?"

"I don't know what you mean by bagpipes—I only know that when people get married in the country, they go about with

the musicians playing before them. What you hear yonder is a violin and a *cornemuse.*"

"A *cornemuse!*" I repeated. "What's that?"

"Oh, country music. A thing you blow into with your mouth, and play upon with your fingers, and squeeze under your arm—like this."

"Then it's the same thing, *ma chére,*" said I. "A bagpipes and a *cornemuse*—a *cornemusè* and a bagpipes. Both of them national, popular, and frightful."

"I'm so fond of music," said Josephine.

Not wishing to object to her tastes, and believing that this observation related to the music then audible, I made no reply.

"And I have never been to an opera," added she.

I was still silent, though from another motive.

"You will take me one night to the Italiens, or the Opera Comique, will you not, Monsieur Basil?" pursued she, determined not to lose her opportunity.

I had now no resource but to promise; which I did, very reluctantly.

"You would enjoy the Opera Comique far more than the Italiens," said I, remembering that Madame de Marignan had a box at the Italiens, and rapidly weighing the chances for and against the possibility of recognition. "At the first they sing in French —at the last, in Italian."

"Ah, bah! I should prefer the French," replied she, falling at once into the snare. "When shall it be—this week?"

"Ye—es; one evening this week."

"What evening?"

"Well, let me see—we had better wait, and consult the advertisements."

"*Dâme!* never mind the advertisements. Let it be Tuesday."

"Why Tuesday?"

"Because it is soon; and because I can get away early on Tuesdays if I ask leave."

I had, plainly, no chance of escape.

"You would not prefer to see the great military piece at the Porte St. Martin?" I suggested. "There are three hundred real

soldiers in it, and they fire real cannon."

"Not I! I have been to the Porte St. Martin, over and over again. Emile knew one of the scene-painter's assistants, and used to get tickets two or three times a month."

"Then it shall be the Opera Comique," said I, with a sigh.

"And on Tuesday evening next?"

"On Tuesday evening next."

At this moment the piping and fiddling broke out afresh, and Josephine, who had scarcely taken the little telescope from her eye all the time, exclaimed that she saw the wedding party going through the market-place of the town.

"There they are—the musicians first; the bride and bridegroom next; and eight friends, all two and two! There will be a dance, depend on it! Let us go down, to the town, and hear all about it! Perhaps they might invite us to join them—who knows?"

"But you would not dance before dinner?"

"*Eh, mon Dieu!* I would dance before breakfast, if I had the chance. Come along.

If we do not make haste, we may miss them."

I rose, feeling, and I daresay, looking, like a martyr; and we went down again into the town.

There we enquired of the first person who seemed likely to know—he was a dapper hairdresser, standing at his shop-door with his hands in his apron pockets and a comb behind his ear—and were told that the wedding-party had just passed through the village, on their way to the Chateau of Sainte Aulaire.

"The Chateau of Sainte Aulaire!" said Josephine. "What are they going to do there? What is there to see?"

"It is an ancient mansion, Mademoiselle, much visited by strangers," replied the hairdresser with exceeding politeness. "Worthy of Mademoiselle's distinguished attention—and Monsieur's. Contains old furniture, old paintings, old china—stands in an extensive park—one of the lions of this neighbourhood, Mademoiselle—also Monsieur."

"To whom does it belong?" I asked, somewhat interested in this account.

"That, Monsieur, is a question difficult to answer," replied the fluent hairdresser, running his fingers through his locks and dispersing a gentle odour of rose-oil. "It was formerly the property of the ancient family of Sainte Aulaire. The last Marquis de Sainte Aulaire, with his wife and family, was guillotined in 1793. Some say that the young heir was saved; and an individual asserting himself to be that heir did actually put forward a claim to the estate, some twenty, or five-and-twenty years ago, but lost his cause for want of sufficient proof. In the meantime, it had passed into the hands of a wealthy republican family descended, it is said, from General Dumouriez. This family held it till within the last four years, when two or three fresh claimants came forward; so that it is now the object of a law-suit which may last till every brick of it falls to ruin, and every tree about it withers away. At present, a man and his wife have charge of the place, and visitors

are permitted to see it any day between twelve and four."

"I should like to see the old place," said I.

"And I should like to see how the bride is dressed," said Josephine, "and if the bridegroom is handsome."

"Well, let us go—not forgetting to thank Monsieur *le Perruquier* for his polite information."

Monsieur *le Perruquier* fell into what dancing-masters call the first position, and bowed elaborately.

"Most welcome, Mademoiselle—and Monsieur," said he. "Straight up the road—past the church about a quarter of a mile—old iron gates—can't miss it. Good afternoon, Mademoiselle—also Monsieur."

Following his directions, we came presently to the gates, which were rusty and broken-hinged, with traces of old gilding still showing faintly here and there upon their battered scrolls and bosses. One of them was standing open, and had evidently been standing so for years; while the other had as evidently

been long closed, so that the deep grass had grown rankly all about it, and the very bolt was crusted over with a yellow lichen. Between the two, an ordinary wooden hurdle had been put up, and this hurdle was opened for us by a little blue-bloused urchin in a pair of huge *sabôts*, who, thinking we belonged to the bridal party, pointed up the dusky avenue, and said, with a grin:—

"*Toute droite, M'sieur—ils sont passés par là!*"

*Par là*, "under the shade of melancholy boughs," we went accordingly. Far away on either side stretched dim vistas of neglected park-land, deep with coarse grass and weeds and, where the trees stood thickest, all choked with a brambly undergrowth. After about a quarter of a mile of this dreary avenue, we came to a broad area of several acres laid out in the Italian style with fountains and terraces, at the upper end of which stood the house—a feudal, *moyen-age* French chateau, with irregular wings, steep slated roofings, innumerable windows, and fantastic steeple-topped tur-

rets sheeted with lead and capped with grotesque gilded weathercocks. The principal front had been repaired in the style of the Renaissance and decorated with little foliated entablatures above the doors and windows; whilst a double flight of steps leading up to a grand entrance on the level of the first storey, like the famous double staircase of Fontainebleau, had been patched on in the very centre, to the manifest disfigurement of the building. Most of the windows were shuttered up, and as we drew nearer, the general evidences of desolation became more apparent. The steps of the terraces were covered with patches of brown and golden moss. The stone urns were some of them fallen in the deep grass, and some broken. There were gaps in the rich balustrade here and there; and the two great fountains on either side of the lower terrace had long since ceased to fling up their feathery columns towards the sun. In the middle of one a broken Pan, noseless and armless, turned up a stony face of mute appeal, as if imploring us to

free him from the parasitic jungle of aquatic plants which flourished rankly round him in the basin. In the other, a stalwart river-god with his finger on his lip seemed listening for the music of those waters which now scarcely stirred amid the tangled weeds that clustered at his feet.

Passing all these, passing also the flower-beds choked with brambles and long waving grasses, and the once quaintly-clipped myrtle and box trees, all flinging out fantastic arms of later growth, we came to the upper terrace, which was paved in curious patterns of stars and arabesques, with stones alternately round and flat. Here a good-humoured, cleanly peasant-woman came clattering out in her *sabôts* from a side-door, key in hand, preceded us up the double flight of steps, unlocked the great door, and admitted us.

The interior, like the front, had been modernized about a hundred and fifty years before, and resembled a little formal Versailles or miniature Fontainebleau. Dismantled halls paved with white marble; panelled

ante-chambers an inch deep in dust; dismal *salons* adorned with Renaissance arabesques and huge looking-glasses, cracked and mildewed, and mended with pasted seams of blue paper; boudoirs with faded Watteau panellings; corridors with painted ceilings where mythological divinities, marvellously foreshortened on a sky-blue ground, were seen surrounded by rose-coloured Cupids and garlanded with ribbons and flowers; innumerable bed-rooms, some containing grim catafalques of beds with gilded cornices and funereal plumes, some empty, some full of stored-up furniture fast going to decay—all these in endless number we traversed, conducted by the good-tempered *conçierge*, whose heavy *sabôts* awakened ghostly echoes from floor to floor.

At length, through an ante-chamber lined with a double file of grim old family portraits—some so blackened with age and dust as to be totally indistinguishable, and others bulging hideously out of their frames—we came to the library; a really noble room, lofty, panelled with walnut wood, floored

with polished oak, and looking over a wide expanse of level country. Long ranges of empty book-shelves fenced in with broken wire-work ran round the walls. The painted ceiling represented, as usual, the heavens and some pagan divinities. A dumb old time-piece, originally constructed to tell the months, the days of the year, and the hours, stood on a massive corner bracket near the door. Long antique mirrors in heavy black frames reached from floor to ceiling between each of the windows; and in the centre of the room, piled all together and festooned with a thick drapery of cobwebs, stood a dozen or so of old carved chairs, screens, and foot-stools, rich with velvet, brocade, and gilded leather, but now looking as if a touch would crumble them to dust. Over the great carved fireplace, however, hung a painting upon which my attention became rivetted as soon as I entered the room—a painting yellow with age; covered with those minute cracks which are like wrinkles on the face of antique art; coated with dust; and yet so singularly attractive that, having

once noticed it, I looked at nothing else.

It was the half-length portrait of a young lady in the costume of the reign of Louis XVI. One hand rested on a stone urn; the other was raised to her bosom, holding a thin blue scarf that seemed to flutter in the wind. Her dress was of white satin, cut low and square, with a stomacher of lace and pearls. She also wore pearls in her hair, on her white arms, and on her whiter neck. Thus much for the mere adjuncts; as for the face—ah, how can I ever describe that pale, perfect, tender face, with its waving brown hair and soft brown eyes, and that steadfast perpetual smile that seemed to light the eyes from within, and to dwell in the corners of the lips without parting or moving them? It was like a face seen in a dream, or the imperfect image which seems to come between us and the page when we read of Imogen asleep.

"Who was this lady?" I asked, eagerly.

The *conçierge* nodded and rubbed her hands.

"Aha! M'sieur," said she, "'tis the best

painting in the chateau, as folks tell me. M'sieur is a connoisseur."

"But do you know whose portrait it is?"

"To be sure I do, M'sieur. It's the portrait of the last Marquise—the one who was guillotined, poor soul, with her husband, in —let me see—in 1793!"

"What an exquisite creature! Look, Josephine, did you ever see anything so beautiful?"

"Beautiful!" repeated the grisette, with a sidelong glance at one of the mirrors. "Beautiful, with such a coiffure and such a boddice! *Ciel!* how tastes differ!"

"But her face, Josephine!"

"What of her face? I'm sure it's plain enough."

"Plain! Good heavens! what . . ."

But it was not worth while to argue upon it. I pulled out one of the old chairs, and so climbed near enough to dust the surface of the painting with my handkerchief.

"I wish I could buy it!" I exclaimed.

Josephine burst into a loud laugh.

"*Grand Dieu!*" said she, half pettishly,

"if you are so much in love with it as all that, I dare say it would not be difficult!"

The *conçierge* shook her head.

"Everything on this estate is locked up," said she. "Nothing can be sold, nothing given away, nothing even repaired, till the *proçes* is ended."

I sighed, and came down reluctantly from my perch. Josephine was visibly impatient. She had seen the wedding-party going down one of the walks at the back of the house; and the *conçierge* was waiting to let us out. I drew her aside, and slipped a liberal gratuity into her hand.

"If I were to come down here some day with a friend of mine who is a painter," I whispered, "would you have any objection, Madame, to allow him to make a little sketch of that portrait?"

The *conçierge* looked into her palm, and seeing the value of the coin, smiled, hesitated, put her finger to her lip, and said:—

"*Ma foi*, M'sieur, I believe I have no business to allow it; but—to oblige a gentleman like you—if there was nobody about——"

I nodded. We understood each other sufficiently, and no more was needed.

Once out of the house, Mademoiselle Josephine pouted, and took upon herself to be sulky—a disposition which was by no means lessened when, after traversing the park in various directions in search of the bridal company, we found that they had gone out long ago by a gate at the other side of the estate, and were by this time piping, most probably, in the adjoining parish.

It was now five o'clock; so we hastened back through the village, cast a last glance at the grim old tower on its steep solitude, consigned ourselves to the yellow omnibus, and in due time were once more flying along the iron road towards Paris. The rapid motion, the dignity of occupying a first-class seat, and, above all, the prospect of an excellent dinner, soon brought my fair companion round again, and by the time we reached the Moulin Rouge, she was all vivacity and good temper. The less I say about that dinner the better. I am humiliated when I recall all that I suf-

fered, and all that she did. I blush even now when I remember how she blew upon her soup, put her knife in her mouth, and picked her teeth with her shawl-pin. What possessed her that she would persist in calling the waiter "Monsieur"? And why, in heaven's name, need she have clapped her hands when I ordered the champagne? To say that I had no appetite—that I wished myself at the antipodes—that I longed to sink into my boots, to smother the waiter, or to do anything equally desperate and unreasonable, is to express but a tithe of the anguish I endured. I bore it, however, in silence, little dreaming what a much heavier trial was yet in store for me.

## CHAPTER III.

*I fall a sacrifice to Mrs. Grundy.*

"A WORD with you, if you please, Basil Arbuthnot," said Dr. Chéron, "when you have finished copying those prescriptions."

Dr. Chéron was standing with his feet firmly planted in the tiger-skin rug, and his back to the fireplace. I was busy writing at the study table, and glancing anxiously from time to time at the skeleton clock upon the chimney-piece; for it was getting on fast towards five, and at half-past six I was to take Josephine to the Opera Comique. As perverse fortune would have it, the Doctor had this afternoon given me more desk-work than usual, and I began to doubt whether I

should be able to dine, dress, and reach the theatre in time if he detained me much longer.

"But you need be in no haste," he added, looking at his watch. "That is to say, upon my account."

I bowed nervously—I was always nervous in his presence—and tried to write faster than ever; but, feeling his cold blue eye upon me, made a blot, smeared it with my sleeve, left one word out, wrote another twice over, and was continually tripped up by my pen, which sputtered hideously and covered the page with florid passages in little round spots, which only needed tails to become crotchets and quavers. At length, just as the clock struck the hour, I finished my task and laid aside my pen.

Dr. Chéron coughed preparatorily.

"It is some time," said he, "since you have given me any news of your father. Do you often hear from him?"

"Not very often, sir," I replied. "About once in every three weeks. He dislikes letter-writing."

Dr. Chéron took a packet of papers from his breast-pocket, and ruffling them over, said, somewhat indifferently:—

"Very true—very true. His notes are brief and few; but always to the purpose. I heard from him this morning."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes—here is his letter. It encloses a remittance of seventy-five pounds; fifty of which are for you. The remaining twenty-five being reserved for the defrayal of your expenses at the Ecole de Medicine and the Ecole Pratique."

I was delighted.

"Both are made payable through my banker," continued Dr. Chéron, "and I am to take charge of your share till you require it; which cannot be just yet, as I understand from this letter that your father supplied you with the sum of one hundred and five pounds on leaving England."

My delight went down to zero.

"Does my father say that I am not to have it now, sir?" I asked, hesitatingly.

"He says, as I have already told you,

that it is to be yours when you require it."

"And if I require it very shortly, sir—in fact, if I require it now?"

"You ought not to require it now," replied the Doctor, with a cold, scrutinising stare. "You ought not to have spent one hundred and five pounds in five months."

I looked down in silence. I had more than spent it long since; and I had to thank Madame de Marignan for the facility with which it had flown. It was not to be denied that my course of lessons in practical politeness had been somewhat expensive.

"How have you spent it?" asked Dr. Chéron, never removing his eyes from my face.

I might have answered, in bouquets, opera stalls, and riding horses; in dress coats, tight boots, and white kid gloves; in new books, new music, bon-bons, cabs, perfumery, and the like inexcusable follies. But I held my tongue instead, and said nothing.

Dr. Chéron looked again at his watch.

"Have you kept any entries of your expenses since you came to Paris?" said he.

"Not with—with any regularity, sir," I replied.

He took out his pencil-case and pocket-book.

"Let us try, then," said he, "to make an average calculation of what they might be in five months."

I began to feel very uncomfortable.

"I believe your father paid your travelling expenses?"

I bowed affirmatively.

"Leaving you the clear sum of one hundred and five pounds."

I bowed again.

"Allowing, then, for your rent—which is, I believe, twenty francs per week," said he, entering the figures as he went on, "there will be four hundred francs spent in five months. For your living, say thirty francs per week, which makes six hundred. For your clothing, seventy-five per month, which makes three hundred and seventy-five, and ought to be quite enough for a young man of moderate tastes. For your washing and fire-wood, perhaps forty per month, which makes two

hundred—and for your incidental expenses, say fifteen per week, which makes three hundred. We thus arrive at a total of one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five francs, which, reduced to English money at the average standard of twenty-five francs to the sovereign, represents the exact sum of seventy-five pounds. Do I make myself understood?"

I bowed, for the third time.

"Of the original one hundred and five pounds, we now have thirty not accounted for. May I ask how much of that surplus you have left?"

"About—not more than—than a hundred and twenty francs," I replied, stripping the feathers off all the pens in succession, without knowing it.

"Have you any debts?"

"A—a few.

"Tailors' bills?"

"Yes, sir."

"What others?"

"A—a couple of months' rent, I believe, sir."

"Is that all?"

"N—not quite."

Dr. Chéron frowned, and looked again at his watch.

"Be good enough, Mr. Arbuthnot," he said, "to spare me this amount of useless interrogation by at once stating the nature and amount of the rest."

"I—I cannot positively state the amount, sir," I said, absurdly trying to get the paper-weight into my waistcoat pocket, and then putting it down in great confusion. "I—I have an account at Monceau's in the Rue Duphot, and . . . ."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Dr. Chéron: "but who is Monceau?"

"Monceau's—Monceau's livery-stables, sir."

Dr. Chéron slightly raised his eye-brows, and entered the name.

"And at Lavoisier's, on the Boulevard Poissonière—"

"What is sold, pray, at Lavoisier's?"

"Gloves, perfumes, hosiery, ready-made linen . . . ."

"Enough—you can proceed."

"I have also a bill at—at Barbet's, in the Passage de l'Opera."

"And Barbet is—?"

"A—a florist!" I replied very reluctantly.

"Humph!—a florist!" observed Dr. Chéron, again transfixing me with the cold, blue eye. "To what amount do you suppose you are indebted to Monsieur Barbet?"

I looked down, and became utterly unintelligible.

"Fifty francs?"

"I—I fear, more than—than—"

"A hundred? A hundred and fifty? Two hundred?"

"About two hundred, I suppose, sir," I said desperately.

"Two hundred francs—that is to say, eight pounds English—to your florist! Really, Mr. Arbuthnot, you must be singularly fond of flowers!"

I looked down in silence.

"Have you a conservatory attached to your rooms?"

The skeleton clock struck the half hour.

"Excuse me, sir," I said, driven now to

the last extremity, "but—but I have an engagement which—in short, I will, if you please, make out a list of—of these items, ascertaining the correct amount of each; and when once paid, I will endeavour—I mean, it is my earnest desire, to—to limit my expenditure strictly to—in short, to study economy for the future. If, in the meantime, you will have the goodness to excuse me . . . ."

"One word, young man. Will the fifty pounds cover your debts?"

"Quite, sir, I am confident."

"And leave you something in hand for your current expenses?"

"Indeed, I fear very little."

"In that case what will you do?"

This was a terrible question, and one for which I could find no answer.

"Write to your father for another remittance—eh?"

"I—upon my word, I dare not, sir," I faltered.

"Then you would go in debt again?"

"I really fear—even with the strictest economy—I—"

"Be so obliging as to let me have your seat," said Dr. Chéron, thrusting the obnoxious note-book into his pocket and taking my place at the desk, from which he brought out a couple of cards, and a printed paper.

"This ticket," said he, "admits the holder to the anatomical course for the term now beginning, and this to the lectures at the Ecole Pratique. Both are in my gift. The first is worth two hundred francs, and the second two hundred and fifty. I ought, perhaps, in strict justice, to bestow them upon some needy and deserving individual: however, to save you from debt, or a very unpleasant alternative, I will fill them in with your name, and, when you bring me all your bills receipted, I will transfer to your account the four hundred and fifty francs which I must, otherwise, have paid for your courses out of the remittance forwarded by your father for that purpose. Understand, however, that I must first have the receipts, and that I expect you, on the word of a gentleman, to

commit no more follies, and to contract no more debts."

"Oh, sir!" I exclaimed, "how can I ever——"

"No thanks, I beg," interposed Dr. Chéron. "Prove your gratitude by your conduct; do not trouble yourself to talk about it."

"Indeed, sir, you may depend——"

"And no promises either, if you please. I attach no kind of value to them. Stay—here is my cheque for the fifty pounds forwarded by your father. With that sum extricate yourself from debt. You know the rest."

Hereupon Dr. Chéron replaced the cards and the printed form, double-locked his desk, and, with a slight gesture of the hand, frigidly dismissed me.

I left the house quite chopfallen. I was relieved, it is true, from the incubus of debt; but then how small a figure I had cut in the eyes of Dr. Chéron! Besides, I was small for the second time—reproved for the second time—lectured, helped, put down, and poohpoohed, for the second time! Could I have

peeped at myself just then through the wrong end of a telescope, I vow I could not have looked smaller in my own eyes.

I had no time to dine; so I despatched a cup of coffee and a roll on my way home, and went hungry to the theatre.

Josephine was got up with immense splendour for this occasion; greatly to her own satisfaction and my disappointment. Having hired a small private box in the least conspicuous part of the theatre, I had committed the cowardly mistake of endeavouring to transform my grisette into a woman of fashion. I had bought her a pink and white opera cloak, a pretty little fan, a pair of white kid gloves, and a bouquet. With these she wore a decent white muslin dress furnished out of the limited resources of her own wardrobe, and a wreath of pink roses, the work of her own clever fingers. Thus equipped, she was far less pretty than in her coquettish little every-day cap, and looked, I regret to say, more like an *ouvrière* than ever. Aggravating above all else, however, was her own undisguised delight in her appearance.

"Are my flowers all right? Is my dress tumbled? Is the hood of my cloak in the middle of my back?" were the questions she addressed to me every moment. In the ante-room she took advantage of each mirror we passed. In the lobby I caught her trying to look at her own back. When we reached our box she pulled her chair to the very centre of it, and sat there as if she expected to be admired by the whole audience.

"My dear Josephine," I remonstrated, "sit back here, facing the stage. You will see much better—besides, it is your proper seat, being the only lady in the box."

"Ah *mon Dieu!* then I cannot see the house—and how pretty it is! Ever so much prettier than the Gaiété, or the Porte St. Martin!"

"You can see the house by peeping behind the curtain."

"As if I were ashamed to be seen! *Par exemple!*"

"Nay, as you please. I only advise you according to custom and fashion."

Josephine pouted, and unwillingly conceded a couple of inches.

"I wish I had brought the little telescope you gave me last Sunday," said she, presently. "There is a gentleman with one down there in the stalls."

"A telescope at the opera—the Gods forbid! Here, however, is my opera-glass, if you like to use it."

Josephine turned it over curiously, and peeped first through one tube, and then through the other.

"Which ought I to look through?" asked she.

"Both, of course."

"Both! How can I?"

"Why thus—as you would look through a pair of spectacles."

"*Ciel!* I can't manage that! I can never look through anything without covering up one eye with my hand."

"Then I think you had better be contented with your own charming eyes, *ma belle*," said I, nervously. "How do you like your bouquet?"

Josephine sniffed at it as if she were taking snuff, and pronounced it perfect. Just then the opera began. I withdrew into the shade, and Josephine was silenced for a while in admiration of the scenery and the dresses. By and by, she began to yawn.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" said she, "when will they have done singing? I have not heard a word, all this time."

"But everything is sung, *ma chére*, in an opera."

"What do you mean? Is there no play?"

"This is the play; only instead of speaking their words, they sing them."

Josephine shrugged her shoulders.

"Ah, bah!" said she. "How stupid! I had rather have seen the *Closerie des Gênets* at the Gaiété, if that is to be the case the whole evening. Oh, dear! there is such a pretty lady come into the opposite box, in such a beautiful blue *glacé* trimmed with black velvet and lace!"

"Hush! you must not talk while they are singing!"

"*Tiens!* it is no pleasure to come out

and be dumb. But do just see the lady in the opposite box? She looks exactly as if she had walked out of a fashion-book."

"My dear child, I don't care one pin to look at her," said I, preferring to keep as much out of sight as possible. "To admire your pretty face is enough for me."

Josephine squeezed my hand affectionately.

"That is just as Emile used to talk to me," said she.

I felt by no means flattered.

"*Regardes donc!*" said she, pulling me by the sleeve just as I was standing up, a little behind her chair, looking at the stage. "That lady in the blue *glacé* never takes her eyes from our box! She points us out to the gentleman who is with her—do look!"

I turned my glass in the direction to which she pointed, and recognised Madame de Marignan!

I turned hot and cold, red and white, all in one moment, and shrank back like a snail that has been touched, or a sea-anemone at the first dig of the naturalist.

"Does she know you?" asked Josephine.

"I—I—probably—that is to say—I have met her in society."

"And who is the gentleman?"

That was just what I was wondering. It was not Delaroche. It was no one whom I had ever seen before. It was a short, fat, pale man, with a bald head, and a ribbon in his button-hole.

"Is he her husband?" pursued Josephine.

The suggestion flashed upon me like a revelation. Had I not heard that M. de Marignan was coming home from Algiers? Of course it was he. No doubt of it. A little vulgar, fat, bald man .... Pshaw! just the sort of husband that she deserved!

"How she looks at me!" said Josephine.

I felt myself blush, so to speak, from head to foot.

"Good heavens! my dear girl," I exclaimed, "take your elbows off the front of the box!"

Josephine complied, with a pettish little grimace.

"And, for mercy's sake, don't hold your

head as if you feared it would tumble off!"

"It is the flowers," said she. "They tickle the back of my neck, whenever I move my head. I am much more comfortable in my cap."

"Never mind. Make the best of it, and listen to this song."

It was the great tenor ballad of the evening. The house was profoundly silent; the first wandering chords of a harp were heard behind the scenes; and Duprez began. In the very midst of one of his finest and tenderest *sostenuto* passages, Josephine sneezed—and such a sneeze! you might have heard it out in the lobbies. An audible titter ran round the house. I saw Madame de Marignan cover her face with her handkerchief, and yield to an irrepressible fit of laughter. As for the tenor, he cast a withering glance up at the box, and made a marked pause before resuming his song. Merciful powers! what crime had I committed that I should be visited with such a punishment as this?

"Wretched girl!" I exclaimed, savagely, "what have you done?"

"Done, *mon ami*!" said Josephine innocently. "Why, I fear I have taken cold."

I groaned aloud.

"Taken cold!" I muttered to myself. "Would to heaven you had taken prussic acid!"

"*Qu'est ce que c'est?*" asked she.

But it was not worth while to reply. I gave myself up to my fate. I determined to remonstrate no more. I flung myself on a seat at the back of the box, and made up my mind to bear all that might yet be in store for me. When she openly ate a stick of *sucre d'orge* after this, I said nothing. When she applauded with both hands, I endured in silence. At length the performance came to a close and the curtain fell. Madame de Marignan had left before the last act, so I ran no danger of encountering her on the way out; but I was profoundly miserable, nevertheless. As for Josephine, she, poor child, had not enjoyed her evening at all, and was naturally out of temper. We quarrelled tremendously in the cab, and parted without having made it up. It was all my

own fault. How could I be such a fool as to suppose that, with a few shreds and patches of finery, I could make a fine lady of a grisette?

## CHAPTER IV.

### *High Art in the Quartier Latin.*

"BUT, my dear fellow, what else could you have expected? You took Mam'selle Josephine to the *Opera Comique. Eh bien!* you might as well have taken an oyster up Mount Vesuvius. Our fair friend was out of her element. *Voilà tout.*"

"Confound her and her element!" I exclaimed with a groan. "What the deuce *is* her element—the Quartier Latin?"

"The Quartier Latin is to some extent her habitat—but then Mam'selle Josephine belongs to a genus of which you, *cher* Monsieur Arbuthnot, are deplorably ignorant—the genus grisette. The grisette from a certain point of view is the *chef-d'œuvre* of

Parisian industry; the bouquet of Parisian civilization. She is indigenous to the *mansarde* and the *pavé*—bears no transplantation —flourishes in the *première balconie*, the suburban *guingette*, and the Salle Valentinois; but degenerates at a higher elevation. To improve her is to spoil her. In her white cap and muslin gown, the Parisian grisette is simply delicious. In a smart bonnet, a Cashmere and a brougham, she is simply detestable. Fine clothes vulgarise her. Fine surroundings demoralise her. Lodged on the sixth storey, rich in the possession of a cuckoo-clock, a canary, half a dozen pots of mignonette, and some bits of cheap furniture in imitation mahogany, she has every virtue and every fault that is charming in woman—childlike gaiety; coquetry; thoughtless generosity; the readiest laugh, the readiest tear, and the warmest heart in the world. Transplant her to the Chaussée d'Antin, instil the taste for diamonds, truffles, and Veuve Clicquot, and you poison her whole nature. She becomes false, cruel, greedy, prodigal of your money,

parsimonious of her own—a vampire—a ghoul—the hideous thing we call in polite parlance a *Fille de Marbre.*"

Thus, with much gravity and emphasis, spoke Herr Franz Müller, lying on his back upon a very ricketty sofa, and smoking like a steam-engine. A cup of half-cold coffee and a bottle of rum three-parts emptied stood beside him on the floor. These were the remains of his breakfast; for it was yet early in the morning of the day following my great misadventure at the Opera Comique, and I had sought him out at his lodgings in the Rue Clovis at an hour when the Quartier Latin was for the most part in bed.

"Josephine, at all events, is not of the stuff that *Filles de Marbre* are made of," I said, smiling.

"Perhaps not—*mais, que voulez vous?* We are what we are. A grisette makes a bad fine lady. A fine lady would make a still worse grisette. The Archbishopric of Paris is a most respectable and desirable preferment; but your humble servant, for instance, would hardly suit the place."

"And the moral of this learned and perspicuous discourse?"

"*Tiens!* the moral is—keep our fair friend in her place. Remember that a dinner at thirty sous in the Palais Royale, or a fête with fireworks at Mabille, will give her ten times more pleasure than the daintiest repast you could order at the Maison Dorée, or the choicest night of the season at either opera house. And how should it be otherwise? One must understand a thing to be able to enjoy it; and I'll be sworn Mam'selle Josephine was infinitely more bored last night than yourself."

Our conversation, or rather his monologue, was here interrupted by the ringing of the outer bell.

The artist sat up, took his pipe from his lips, and looked considerably disturbed.

"*Mille tonnerres!*" said he in a low tone. "Who can it be? . . . so early in the day . . . not yet ten o'clock . . . it is very mysterious."

"It is only mysterious," said I, "as long as you don't open the door. Shall I answer the bell?"

"No—yes—wait a moment . . . suppose it is that demon, my landlord, or that arch-fiend, my tailor—then you must say . . . holy St. Nicholas! you must say I am in bed with small-pox, or that I've broken out suddenly into homicidal delirium, and you're my keeper."

"Unfortunately I should not know either of your princes of darkness at first sight."

"True—and it might be Dupont, who owes me thirty francs, and swore by the bones of his aunt (an excellent person, who keeps an estaminet in the Place St. Sulpice) that he would pay me this week. *Diable!* there goes the bell again."

"It would perhaps be safest," I suggested, "to let M. or N. ring on till he is tired of the exercise."

"But conceive the horrid possibility of letting thirty francs ring themselves out of patience! No, *mon ami*—I will dare the worst that may happen. Wait here for me—I will answer the door myself."

Now, it should be explained that Müller's apartments consisted of three rooms. First,

a small outer chamber which he dignified with the title of Salle d'Attente, but which, as it was mainly furnished with old boots, umbrellas and walking-sticks, and contained, by way of accommodation for visitors only a three-legged stool and a door-mat, would have been more fitly designated as the hall. Between this Salle d'Attente and the den in which he slept, ate, smoked, and received his friends, lay the studio—once a stately salon, now a wilderness of litter and dilapidation. On one side you beheld three windows closely boarded up, with strips of newspaper pasted over the cracks to exclude every gleam of day. Overhead yawned a huge, dusty skylight, to make way for which a fine old painted ceiling had been ruthlessly knocked away. On the walls were pinned and pasted all sorts of rough sketches and studies in colour and crayon. In one corner lolled a despondent-looking lay figure in a moth-eaten Spanish cloak; in another lay a heap of plaster casts, gigantic hands and feet, broken-nosed masks of the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Hercules Farnese, and other

foreigners of distinction. Upon the chimney-piece were displayed a pair of foils, a lute, a skull, an antique German drinking mug, and several very modern empty bottles. In the middle of the room stood two large easels, a divan, a round table, and three or four chairs; while the floor was thickly strewn with empty colour-tubes, bits of painting-rag, corks, cigar-ends, and all kinds of miscellaneous litter.

All these things I had observed as I passed in; for this, be it remembered, was my first visit to Müller in his own territory.

I heard him go through the studio and close the door behind him, and then I heard him open the door upon the public staircase. Presently he came back, shutting the door behind him as before.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed breathlessly, "you have brought luck with you! What do you think? A sitter—positively, a sitter! Wants to be sketched in at once —*Vive la France!*"

"Man or woman? Young or old? Plain or pretty?"

"Elderly half-length, feminine gender—Madame Tapotte. They are both there, Monsieur and Madame. Excellent couple—redolent of the country—husband bucolic, adipose, auriferous—wife arrayed in all her glory, like the Queen of Sheba. I left them in the Salle d'Attente—told them I had a sitter—time immensely occupied—half-lengths furiously in demand .... *Will* you oblige me by performing the part for a few minutes, just to carry out the idea?"

"What part?"

"The part of sitter."

"Oh, with pleasure," I replied, laughing. "Do with me what you please."

"You don't mind? Come! you are the best fellow in the world. Now, if you'll sit in that arm-chair facing the light—head a little thrown back, arms folded, chin up ... Capital! You don't know what an effect this will have upon the provincial mind!"

"But you're not going to let them in! You have no portrait of me to be at work upon!"

"My dear fellow, I've dozens of half-

finished studies, any one of which will answer the purpose. *Voilà!* here is the very thing."

And snatching up a canvas that had been standing till now with its face to the wall, he flourished it triumphantly before my eyes, and placed it on the easel.

"Heavens and earth!" I exclaimed, "that's a copy of the Titian in the Louvre—the 'Young Man with the Glove!'"

"What of that? Our Tapottes will never find out the difference. By the way, I told them you were a great English Milord, so please keep up the character."

"I will try to do credit to the peerage."

"And if you would not mind throwing in a word of English every now and then . . . a little Goddam, for instance . . . Eh?"

I laughed and shook my head.

"I will pose for you as Milord with all the pleasure in life," I said; "only I cannot undertake to pose for the traditional Milord of the Bouffes Parisiens! However, I will speak some English, and, if you like, I'll know no French."

"No, no—*diable!* you must know a little,

or I can't exchange a word with you. But very little—the less the better. And now I'll let them in."

They came; Madame first—tall, buxom, large-featured, fresh-coloured, radiant in flowers, lace, and Palais Royal jewelry; then Monsieur—short, fat, bald, rosy and smiling, with a huge frill to his shirt-front and a nankeen waistcoat.

Müller introduced them with much ceremony and many apologies.

"Permit me, milord," he said, "to present Monsieur and Madame Tapotte—Monsieur and Madame Tapotte; Milord Smithfield."

I rose and bowed with the gravity becoming my rank.

"I have explained to milord," continued Müller, addressing himself partly to the new-comers, partly to me, and chiefly to the study on the easel, "that, having no second room in which to invite Monsieur and Madame to repose themselves, I am compelled to ask them into the studio—where, however, his lordship is so very kind as to say

that they are welcome." (Hereupon Madame Tapotte curtsied again, and Monsieur ducked his bald head, and I returned their salutations with the same dignity as before.) "If Monsieur and Madame will be pleased to take seats, however, his lordship's sitting will be ended in about ten minutes. *Mille pardons*, the face, milord, a little more to the right. Thank you—thank you very much. And if you will do me the favour to look at me . . . for the expression of the eye—just so—thank you! A most important point, milord, is the expression of the eye. When I say the expression, I mean the fire, the sparkle, the liquidity . . . *enfin*, the expression!"

Here he affected to put in some touches with immense delicacy—then retreated a couple of yards, the better to contemplate his work—pursed up his mouth—ran his fingers through his hair—shaded his eyes with his hand—went back and put in another touch—again retreated—again put in a touch; and so on some three or four times successively.

Meanwhile Monsieur and Madame Tapotte were fidgetting upon their chairs in respectful silence. Every now and then they exchanged glances of wonder and admiration. They were evidently dying to compare my august features with my portrait, but dared not take the liberty of rising. At length the lady's curiosity could hold out no longer.

"*Ah, mon Dieu!*" she said; "but it must be very fatiguing to sit so long in the same position. And to paint . . . *Ciel!* what practice! what perseverance! what patience! *Avec permission*, M'sieur" . . . .

And with this she sidled up to Müller's elbow, leaving Monsieur Tapotte thunderstruck at her audacity.

Then for a moment she stood silent; but during that moment the eager, apologetic smile vanished suddenly out of her face, and was succeeded by an expression of blank disappointment.

"*Tiens!*" she said bluntly. "I don't see one bit of likeness."

I turned hot from head to foot, but

Müller's serene effrontery was equal to the occasion.

"I daresay not, Madame," he replied, coolly. "I daresay not. This portrait is not intended to be like."

Madame Tapotte's eyes and mouth opened simultaneously.

"*Comment!*" she exclaimed.

"I should be extremely sorry," continued Müller, loftily, "and his lordship would be extremely sorry, if there were too much resemblance."

"But a—a likeness—it seems to me, should at all events be—like," stammered Madame Tapotte, utterly bewildered.

"And if M'sieur is to paint my wife," added Monsieur Tapotte, who had by this time joined the group at the easel, "I—I . . . *Dâme!* it must be a good deal more like than this!"

Müller drew himself up with an air of great dignity.

"Sir," he said, "if Madame does me the honour to sit to me for her portrait—for her *own* portrait, observe—I flatter myself

the resemblance will be overwhelming. But you must permit me to inform you that Milord Smithfield is not sitting for his own portrait."

The Tapottes looked at each other in a state bordering on stupefaction.

"His lordship," continued Müller, "is sitting for the portrait of one of his illustrious ancestors—a nobleman of the period of Queen Elizabeth."

Tapotte *mari* scratched his head, and smiled feebly.

"*Parbleu!*" said he, "*mais c'est bien drôle, ça!*"

The artist shrugged his shoulders.

"It so happens," said he, "that his lordship's gallery at Smithfield Castle has unhappily been more than half destroyed by fire. Two centuries of family portraits reduced to ashes! Terrible misfortune! Only one way of repairing the loss—that is of partially repairing it. I do my best. I read the family records—I study the history of the period—his lordship sits to me daily—I endeavour to give a certain amount of family likeness;

sometimes more, you observe, sometimes less . . . . enormous responsibility, Monsieur Tapotte!"

"Oh, enormous!"

"The taste for family portraits," continued Müller, still touching up the Titian, "is a very natural one—and is on the increase. Many gentlemen of—of somewhat recent wealth, come to me for their ancestors."

"No!"

"*Foi d'honneur.* Few persons, however, are as conscientious as his lordship in the matter of family resemblance. They mostly buy up their forefathers ready-made—adopt them, christen them, and ask no questions."

Monsieur and Madame Tapotte exchanged glances.

"*Tiens, mon ami,* why should we not have an ancestor or two, as well as other folks," suggested the lady, in a very audible whisper.

Monsieur shook his head, and muttered something about the expense.

"There is no harm, at all events," urged madame, "in asking the price."

"My charge for gallery portraits, madame,

varies from sixty to a hundred francs," said Müller.

"Heavens! how dear! Why, my own portrait is to be only fifty."

"Sixty, Madame, if we put in the hands and the jewelry," said Müller, blandly.

"*Eh bien!*—sixty. But for these other things . . . bah! *ils sont fièrement chers.*"

"*Pardon*, madame! The elegancies and superfluities of life are, by a just rule of political economy, expensive. It is right that they should be so; as it is right that the necessaries of life should be within the reach of the poorest. Bread, for instance, is strictly necessary, and should be cheap. A great-grandfather, on the contrary, is an elegant superfluity, and may be put up at a high figure."

"There is some truth in that," murmured Monsieur Tapotte.

"Besides, in the present instance, one also pays for antiquity."

"*C'est juste—C'est juste.*"

"At the same time," continued Müller, "if Monsieur Tapotte were to honour me

with a commission for, say, half a dozen family portraits, I would endeavour to put them in at forty francs apiece—including, at that very low price, a Revolutionary Deputy, a beauty of the Louis Quinze period, and a Marshal of France."

"*Tiens!* that's a fair offer enough," said madame. "What say you, *mon ami?*"

But Monsieur Tapotte, being a cautious man, would say nothing hastily. He coughed, looked doubtful, declined to commit himself to an opinion, and presently drew off into a corner for the purpose of holding a whispered consultation with his wife.

Meanwhile Müller laid aside his brushes and palette, informed me with a profound bow that my lordship had honoured him by sitting as long as was strictly necessary, and requested my opinion upon the progress of the work.

I praised it rapturously. You would have thought, to hear me, that for drawing, breadth, finish, colour, composition, chiaroscuro, and every other merit that a painting could possess, this particular *chef-d'œuvre* excelled all the masterpieces of Europe.

Müller bowed, and bowed, and bowed, like a Chinaman at a visit of ceremony. He was more than proud; he was overwhelmed, *accablé*, et cætera, et cætera.

The Tapottes left off whispering, and listened breathlessly.

"He is evidently a great painter, *not' jeune homme!*" said Madame in one of her large whispers.

To which Monsieur replied as audibly:—"*ça se voit, ma femme—sacre nom d'un pipe!*"

"Milord will do me the favour to sit again on Friday?" said Müller, as I took up my hat and gloves.

I replied with infinite condescension that I would endeavour to do so. I then made the stiffest of stiff bows to the excellent Tapottes, and, ushered to the door by Müller, took my departure majestically in the character of Lord Smithfield.

## CHAPTER V.

### *The Quartier Latin.*

THE dear old Quartier Latin of my time—the Quartier Latin of Balzac, of Béranger, of Henry Murger—the Quartier Latin where Franz Müller had his studio; where Messieurs Gustave, Jules, and Adrien gave their unparelleled *soiréés dansantes;* where I first met my ex-flame Josephine—exists no longer. It has been improved off the face of the earth, and with it such a gay, bizarre, improvident world of youth and folly as shall never again be met together on the banks of the Seine.

Ah me! how well I remember that dingy, delightful Arcadia—the Rue de la Vieille Boucherie, narrow, noisy, crowded, with

projecting upper storeys and Gothic pent-house roofs—the Rue de la Parcheminerie, unchanged since the Middle Ages—the Rue St. Jacques, steep, interminable, dilapidated; with its dingy cabarets, its brasseries, its cheap restaurants, its grimy shop windows filled with coloured prints, with cooked meats, with tobacco, old books, and old clothes; its ancient colleges and hospitals, time-worn and weather-beaten, frowning down upon the busy thoroughfare and breaking the squalid line of shops; its grim old hotels swarming with lodgers, floor above floor, from the cobblers in the cellars to the grisettes in the attics! Then again, the gloomy old Place St. Michel, its abundant fountain ever flowing, ever surrounded by water-carts and water-carriers, by women with pails, and bare-footed street urchins, and thirsty drovers drinking out of iron cups chained to the wall. And then, too, the Rue de la Harpe . . . .

I close my eyes, and the strange, precipitous, picturesque, decrepit old street, with its busy, surging crowd, its street-cries, its

street-music, and its indescribable union of gloom and gaiety, rises from its ashes. Here, grand old dilapidated mansions with shattered stone-carvings, delicate wrought-iron balconies all rust-eaten and broken, and windows in which every other pane is cracked or patched, alternate with more modern but still more ruinous houses, some leaning this way, some that, some with bulging upper storeys, some with doorways sunk below the level of the pavement. Yonder, gloomy and grim, stands the College of Saint Louis. Dark alleys open off here and there from the main thoroughfare, and narrow side streets, steep as flights of steps. Low sheds and open stalls cling, limpet-like, to every available nook and corner. An endless procession of trucks, waggons, water-carts and fiacres rumbles perpetually by. Here people live at their windows and in the doorways—the women talking from balcony to balcony, the men smoking, reading, playing at dominoes. Here too are more cafés and cabarets, open-air stalls for the sale of fried fish, and cheap

restaurants for workmen and students where, for a sum equivalent to sevenpence half-penny English, the Quartier Latin regales itself upon meats and drinks of dark and enigmatical origin. Close at hand is the Place and College of the Sorbonne—silent in the midst of noisy life, solitary in the heart of the most crowded quarter of Paris. A sombre mediæval gloom pervades that ancient quadrangle; scant tufts of sickly grass grow here and there in the interstices of the pavement; the dust of centuries crust those long rows of windows never opened. A little further on is the Rue des Grès, narrow, crowded, picturesque, one uninterrupted perspective of bookstalls and book-shops from end to end. Here the book-seller occasionally pursues a twofold calling, and retails not only literature but a cellar of *petit vin bleu;* and here, overnight, the thirsty student exchanges for a bottle of Macon the "Code Civile" that he must perforce buy back again at second-hand in the morning.

A little farther on, and we come to the College Saint Louis, once the old College

Narbonne; and yet a few yards more, and we are at the doors of the Theatre du Pantheon, once upon a time the Church of St. Bénoit, where the stage occupies the site of the altar, and an orchestra stall in what was once the nave may be had for seventy-five centimes. Here, too, might be seen the shop of the immortal Lesage, renowned throughout the Quartier for the manufacture of a certain kind of transcendental hampatty peculiarly beloved by student and grisette; and here, clustering within a stone's throw of each other, were to be found those famous Restaurants, Pompon, Viot, Flicoteaux, and the "Bœuf Enragé," where, on gala days, many an Alphonse and Fifine, many a Théophile and Cerisette, were wont to hold high feast and festival—terms sevenpence-halfpenny each, bread at discretion, water gratis, wine and toothpicks extra.

But it was in the side streets, courts, and *impasses* that branched off to the left and right of the main arteries, that one came upon the very heart of the old Pays Latin; for the Rue St. Jacques, the Rue de la

Harpe, the Rue des Grès, narrow, steep, dilapidated though they might be, were in truth the leading thoroughfares—the Boulevards, so to speak—of the Student Quartier. In most of the side alleys, however, some of which dated back as far, and farther, than the fifteenth century, there was no footway for passengers, and barely space for one wheeled vehicle at a time. A filthy gutter invariably flowed down the middle of the street. The pavement, as it peeped out here and there through a *moraine* of superimposed mud and offal, was seen to consist of small oblong stones, like petrified kidney potatoes. The houses, some leaning this way, some that, with projecting upper storeys and overhanging gable-roofs, nodded together overhead, leaving but a narrow strip of sky down which the sunlight strove in vain to struggle. Long poles upon which were suspended old clothes hung out to air, and ragged linen to dry, stood out like tattered banners from the attic windows. Here, too, every ground-floor was a shop, open, unglazed, cavernous, where

the dealer lay *perdu* in the gloom of midday, like a spider in the midst of his web, surrounded by piles of old bottles, old iron, old clothes, old furniture, or whatever else his stock in trade might consist of.

Of such streets—less like streets, indeed, than narrow, overhanging gorges and ravines of damp and mouldering stone—of such streets, I say, intricate, winding, ill-lighted, unventilated, pervaded by an atmosphere compounded of the fumes of fried fish, tobacco, old leather, mildew and dirt, there were hundreds in the Quartier Latin of my time :—streets to the last degree unattractive as places of human habitation, but rich, nevertheless, in historic associations, in picturesque detail, and in archæological interest. Such a street, for instance, was the Rue de la Fouarre (scarcely a feature of which has been modernized to this day), where Dante, when a student of theology in Paris, attended the lectures of one Sigebert, a learned monk of Gemblours, who discoursed to his scholars in the open air, they sitting round him the while upon fresh

straw strewn upon the pavement. Such a street was the Rue des Cordiers, close adjoining the Rue des Grès, where Rousseau lived and wrote; and the Rue du Dragon, where might then be seen the house of Bernard Palissy; and the Rue des Maçons, where Racine lived; and the Rue des Marais, where Adrienne Lecouvreur—poor, beautiful, generous, ill-fated Adrienne Lecouvreur!—died. Here, too, in a blind alley opening off the Rue St. Jacques, yet stands part of that Carmelite Convent in which for thirty years Madame de la Vallière expiated the solitary frailty of her life. And so at every turn! Not a gloomy by-street, not a dilapidated fountain, not a grim old college façade but had its history, or its legend. Here the voice of Abelard thundered new truths, and Rabelais jested, and Petrarch discoursed with the doctors. Here, in the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie, walked the shades of Racine, of Molière, of Corneille, of Voltaire. Dear, venerable, immortal old Quartier Latin! Thy streets were narrow, but they were the arteries

through which, century after century, circulated all the wisdom and poetry, all the art, and science, and learning of France! Their gloom, their squalor, their very dirt, was sacred. Could I have had my will, not a stone of the old place should have been touched, not a pavement widened, not a landmark effaced.

Then beside, yet not apart from, all that was mediæval and historic in the Pays Latin, ran the gay, effervescent, laughing current of the life of the *jeunesse d'aujourd-hui.* Here beat the very heart of that rare, that immortal, that unparalleled *vie de Bohême* the vagabond poetry of which possesses such an inexhaustible charm for even the soberest imagination. What brick and mortar idylls, what romances *au cinquième*, what joyous epithalamiums, what gay improvident *ménages*, what kisses, what laughter, what tears, what lightly-spoken and lightly-broken vows those old walls could have told of!

Here, appareled in all sorts of unimaginable tailoring, in jaunty coloured cap or

flapped sombrero, his pipe dangling from his button-hole, his hair and beard displaying every eccentricity under heaven, the Paris student, the *Pays Latiniste pur sang*, lived and had his being. Poring over the bookstalls in the Place du Pantheon or the Rue des Grès—hurrying along towards this or that college with a huge volume under each arm, about nine o'clock in the morning—haunting the cafés at mid-day and the restaurants at six—swinging his legs out of upper windows and smoking in his shirt-sleeves in the summer evenings—crowding the pit of the Odéon and every part of the Theatre du Pantheon—playing wind instruments at dead of night to the torment of his neighbours, or, in vocal mood, traversing the Quartier with a select society of musical friends about the small hours of the morning—getting into scuffles with the gendarmes—flirting, dancing, playing billiards and the deuce; falling in love and in debt; dividing his time between Aristotle and Mademoiselle Mimi Pinson .... here, and here only, in all his phases, at every hour of

the day and night, he swarmed, ubiquitous.

And here, too (a necessary sequence), flourished the fair and frail grisette. Her race, alas! is now all but extinct—the race of Frétillon, of Françine, of Lisette, Musette, Rosette, and all the rest of that too-fascinating terminology—the race immortalised again and again by Béranger, Gavarni, Balzac, De Musset; sketched by a hundred pencils and described by a hundred pens; celebrated in all manner of metres and set to all manner of melodies; now caricatured and now canonized; now painted wholly *en noir* and now all *couleur de rose;* yet, however often described, however skilfully analysed, remaining for ever indescribable, and for ever defying analysis!

"De tous les produits Parisiens," says Monsieur Jules Janin (himself the quintessence of everything most Parisian), "le produit le plus Parisien, sans contredit, c'est la grisette." True; but our epigrammatist should have gone a step farther. He should have added that the grisette *pur sang* is to be found nowhere except in Paris; and

(still a step farther) nowhere in Paris save between the Pont Neuf and the Barrière d'Enfer. There she reigns; there (ah! let me use the delicious present tense—let me believe that I still live in Arcadia!)—there she lights up the old streets with her smile; makes the old walls ring with her laughter; flits over the crossings like a fairy; wears the most coquettish of little caps and the daintiest of little shoes; rises to her work with the dawn; keeps a pet canary; trains a nasturtium round her window; loves as heartily as she laughs, and almost as readily; owes not a sou, saves not a centime; sews on Adolphe's buttons, like a good neighbour; is never so happy as when Adolphe in return takes her to Tivoli or the Jardin Turc; adores *galette*, *sucre d'orge*, and Frederick Lemaître; and looks upon a masked ball and a debardeur dress as the summit of human felicity.

*Vive la grisette!* Shall I not follow many an illustrious example and sing my modest pæan in her praise? Frown not, august Britannia! Look not so severely askance

upon my poor little heroine of the Quartier Latin! Thinkest thou because thou art so eminently virtuous that she who has many a serviceable virtue of her own, shall be debarred from her share in this world's cakes and ale?

*Vive la grisette!* Let us think and speak no evil of her. "Elle ne tient au vice que par un rayon, et s'en éloigne par les mille autres points de la circonference sociale." The world sees only her follies, and sees them at first sight; her good qualities lie hidden in the shade. Is she not busy as a bee, joyous as a lark, helpful, pitiful, unselfish, industrious, contented? How often has she not slipped her last coin into the alms-box at the hospital gate, and gone supperless to bed? How often sat up all night, after a long day's toil in a crowded work-room, to nurse Victorine in the fever? How often pawned her Sunday gown and shawl, to redeem that coat without which Adolphe cannot appear before the examiners to-morrow morning? Granted, if you will, that she has an insatiable appetite for

sweets, cigarettes, and theatrical admissions —shall she not be welcome to her tastes? And is it her fault if her capacity in the way of miscellaneous refreshments partakes of the nature of the miraculous—somewhat to the inconvenience of Adolphe, who has overspent his allowance? Supposing even that she may now and then indulge (among friends) in a very modified can-can at the Chaumière—what does that prove, except that her heels are as light as her heart, and that her early education has been somewhat neglected?

But I am writing of a world that has vanished as completely as the lost Pleiad. The Quartier Latin of my time is no more. The Chaumière is no more. The grisette is fast dying out. Of the Rue de la Harpe not a recognisable feature is left. The old Place St. Michel, the fountain, the Theatre du Panthéon, are gone as if they had never been. Whole streets, I might say whole parishes, have been swept away—whole chapters of mediæval history erased for ever.

Well, I love to close my eyes from time to time, and evoke the dear old haunts from their ruins; to descend once more the perilous steeps of the Rue St. Jacques, and to thread the labyrinthine by-streets that surround the Ecole de Medicine. I see them all so plainly! I look in at the familiar print-shops—I meet many a long-forgotten face—I hear many a long-forgotten voice—I am twenty years of age and a student again!

Ah me! what a pleasant time, and what a land of enchantment! Dingy, dilapidated, decrepit as it was, that graceless old Quartier Latin, believe me, was paved with roses and lighted with laughing gas.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *The Fête at Courbevoie.*

"HALTE *là!* I thought I should catch you about this time! They've been giving you unconscionable good measure to-day, though, haven't they? I thought Bollinet's lecture was always over by three; and here I've been moralizing on the flight of Time for more than twenty minutes."

So saying, Müller, having stopped me as I was coming down the steps of the Hôtel Dieu, linked his arm in mine, drew me into a shady angle under the lee of Nôtre Dame, and, without leaving me time to reply, went on pouring out his light, eager chatter as readily as a mountain-spring bubbles out its waters.

"I thought you'd like to know about the Tapottes, you see—and I was dying to tell you. I went to your rooms last night between eight and nine, and you were out; so I thought the only sure way was to come here—I know you never miss Bollinet's Lectures. Well, as I was saying, the Tapottes . . . Oh, *mon cher!* I am your debtor for life in that matter of Milord Smithfield. It has been the making of me. What do you think? Tapotte is not only going to sit for a companion half-length to Madame's portrait, but he has given me a commission for half-a-dozen ancestors. Fancy—half-a-dozen illustrious dead-and-gone Tapottes! What a scope for the imagination! What a bewildering vista of *billets de banque!* I feel —ah, *mon ami!* I feel that the wildest visions of my youth are about to be realized, and that I shall see my tailor's bill receipted before I die!"

"I'm delighted," said I, "that Tapotte has turned up a trump card."

"A trump card? Say a California—a Pactolus—a Golden Calf. Nay, hath not

Tapotte two golden calves? Is he not of the precious metal all compact? Stands he not, in the amiable ripeness of his years, a living representative of the Golden Age? '*O bella età del oro!*"

And to my horror, he then and there executed a frantic *pas seul.*

"Gracious powers!" I exclaimed. "Are you mad?"

"Yes—raving mad. Have you any objection?"

"But, my dear fellow—in the face of day—in the streets of Paris! We shall get taken up by the police!"

"Then suppose we get out of the streets of Paris? I'm tired enough, Heaven knows, of cultivating the arid soil of the Pavé. See, it's a glorious afternoon. Let's go somewhere."

"With all my heart. Where?"

"*Ah, mon Dieu! cela m'est egal.* Enghien—Vincennes—St. Cloud—Versailles . . . . anywhere you like. Most probably there's a fête going on somewhere, if we only knew where."

"Can't we find out?"

"Oh, yes—we can drop into a Café and look at the *Petites Affiches;* only that entails an absinthe; or we can go into the nearest Omnibus Bureau and see the notices on the walls, which will be cheaper."

So we threaded our way along the narrow thoroughfares of the Ile de la Cité, and came presently to an Omnibus Bureau on the Quai de l'Horloge, overlooking the Pont Neuf and the river. Here the first thing we saw was a flaming placard setting forth the pleasures and attractions of the great annual fête at Courbevoie; a village on the banks of the Seine, a mile or two beyond Neuilly.

"*Voilà notre affaire!*" said Müller, gaily. "We can't do better than steer straight for Courbevoie."

Saying which, he hailed a passing fiacre and bade the coachman drive to the Embarcadère of the Rive Droite.

"We shall amuse ourselves famously at Courbevoie," he said, as we rattled over the stones. "We'll dine at the Toison d'Or—an excellent little restaurant overlooking

the river; and if you're fond of angling, we can hire a punt and catch our own fish for dinner. Then there will be plenty of fiddling and dancing at the guingettes and gardens in the evening. By the way, though, I've no money! That is to say, none worth speaking of—*voilà!* . . . one franc, one piece of fifty centimes, another of twenty centimes, and some sous. I hope your pockets are better lined than mine."

"Not much, I fear," I replied, pulling out my porte-monnaie, and emptying the contents into my hand. They amounted to nine francs and seventy-five centimes.

"*Parbleu!* we've just eleven francs and a half between us," said Müller. "A modest sum-total; but we must make it as elastic as we can. Let me see, there'll be a franc for the fiacre, four francs for our return tickets, four for our dinner, and two and a half to spend as we like in the fair. Well, we can't commit any great extravagance with that amount of floating capital."

"Better turn back and go to my rooms

for some more money!" I exclaimed. "I've two Napoleons in my desk."

"No, no—we should miss the three-fifty train, and not get another till between five and six."

"But we shall have no fun if we have no money!"

"I dissent entirely from that proposition, Monsieur Englishman. I have always had plenty of fun, and I have been short of cash since the hour of my birth. Come, it shall be my proud task to-day to prove to you the pleasures of impecuniosity!"

So with our eleven francs and a half, we went on to the station, and took our places for Courbevoie.

We travelled, of course, by third class in the open wagons; and it so happened that in our compartment we had the company of three pretty little chattering grisettes, a fat countrywoman with a basket, and a quiet-looking elderly female with her niece. These last wore bonnets, and some kind of slight mourning. They belonged evidently to the small bourgeoise class, and sat very

quietly in the corner of the carriage, speaking to no one. The three grisettes, however, kept up an incessant fire of small talk and squabble.

"I was on this very line last Sunday," said one. "I went with Julie to Asnières, and we were so gay! I wonder if it will be very gay at Courbevoie."

"*Je m'en doute*," replied another, whom they called Lolotte. "I came to one of the Courbevoie fêtes last spring, and it was not gay at all. But then, to be sure, I was with Edouard, and he is as dull as the first day in Lent. Where were you last Sunday, Adèle?"

"I did not go beyond the barriers. I went to the Cirque with my cousin, and we dined in the Palais Royale. We enjoyed ourselves so much! You know my cousin?"

"Ah! yes—the little fellow with the curly hair and the whiskers, who waits for you at the corner when we leave the workshop."

"The same—Achille."

"Your Achille is nice-looking," said

Mademoiselle Lolotte, with a somewhat critical air. "It is a pity he squints."

"He does not squint, mam'selle."

"Oh, *ma chère!* I appeal to Caroline."

"I am not sure that he actually squints," said Mam'selle Caroline, speaking for the first time; "but he certainly has one eye larger than the other, and of quite a different colour."

"*Tiens*, Caroline—it seems to me that you look very closely into the eyes of young men," exclaims Adèle, turning sharply upon this new assailant.

"At all events you admit that Caroline is right!" cries Lolotte triumphantly.

"I admit nothing of the kind. I say that you are both very ill-natured, and that you say what is not true. As for you, Lolotte, I don't believe you ever had the chance of seeing a young man's eyes turned upon you, or you would not be so pleased with the attentions of an old one."

"An *old* one!" shrieked Mam'selle Lolotte. "Ah, *mon Dieu!* Is a man old at forty-seven? Monsieur Durand is in the

prime of life, and there isn't a girl in the Quartier who would not be proud of his attentions!"

"He's sixty, if an hour," said the injured Adèle. "And as for you, Caroline, who have never had a beau in your life" . . .

"*Ciel!* what a calumny!—I—never had a . . . Holy Saint Geneviève! why, it was only last Thursday week" . . . .

Here the train stopped at the Asnières station, and two privates of the Garde Impériale got into the carriage. The horizon cleared as if by magic. The grisettes suddenly forgot their differences, and began to chat quite amicably. The soldiers twirled their mustachios, listened, smiled, and essayed to join in the conversation. In a few minutes all was mirth and flirtation.

Meanwhile Müller was casting admiring glances on the young girl in the corner, whilst the fat countrywoman, pursing up her mouth, and watching the grisettes and soldiers, looked the image of offended virtue.

"Dâme! Madame," she said, addressing

herself to the old lady in the bonnet, "girls usen't to be so forward in the days when you and I were young!"

To which the old lady in the bonnet, blandly smiling, replied:—

"Beautiful, for the time of year."

"Eh? For the time of year? Dâme! I don't see that the time of year has anything to do with it," exclaimed the fat countrywoman.

Here the young girl in the corner, blushing and smiling very sweetly, interposed with—"Pardon, Madame—my aunt is somewhat deaf. Pray excuse her."

Whereupon the old lady, watching the motion of her niece's lips, added:—

"Ah, yes—yes! I am a poor, deaf old woman—I don't understand what you say. Talk to my little Marie here—she can answer you."

"I, for one, desire nothing better than permission to talk to Mademoiselle," said Müller gallantly.

"*Mais, Monsieur*" . . . .

"Mademoiselle, with Madame her aunt, are going to the fête at Courbevoie?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"The river is very pretty thereabouts, and the walks through the meadows are delightful."

"Indeed, Monsieur!"

"Mademoiselle does not know the place?"

"No, Monsieur."

"Ah, if I might only be permitted to act as guide! I know every foot of the ground about Courbevoie."

Mademoiselle Marie blushed again, looked down, and made no reply.

"I am a painter," continued Müller; "and I have sketched all the windings of the Seine from Neuilly to St. Germains. My friend here is English—he is a student of medicine, and speaks excellent French."

"What is the gentleman saying, *mon enfant?*" asked the old lady, somewhat anxiously.

"Monsieur says that the river is very pretty about Courbevoie, *ma tante*," replied Mademoiselle Marie, raising her voice.

"Ah! ah! and what else?"

"Monsieur is a painter."

"A painter? Ah, dear me! it's an unhealthy occupation. My poor brother Pierre might have been alive to this day if he had taken to any other line of business! You must take great care of your lungs, young man. You look delicate."

Müller laughed, shook his head, and declared at the top of his voice that he had never had a day's illness in his life.

Here the pretty niece again interposed.

"Ah, Monsieur," she said, "my aunt does not understand . . . . My—my uncle Pierre was a house-painter."

"A very respectable occupation, Mademoiselle," replied Müller, politely. "For my own part, I would sooner paint the insides of some houses than the outsides of some people."

At this moment the train began to slacken pace, and the steam was let off with a demoniac shriek.

"*Tiens, mon enfant,*" said the old lady, turning towards her niece with affectionate

anxiety. "I hope you have not taken cold."

The excellent soul believed that it was Mademoiselle Marie who sneezed.

And now the train had stopped—the porters were running along the platform, shouting, "Courbevoie! Courbevoie!"—the passengers were scrambling out *en masse*—and beyond the barrier one saw a confused crowd of *charrette* and omnibus drivers, touters, fruit-sellers, and idlers of every description. Müller handed out the old lady and the niece; the fat countrywoman scrambled up into a kind of tumbril driven by a boy in *sabôts;* the grisettes and soldiers walked off together; and the tide of holiday-makers, some on foot, some in hired vehicles, set towards the village. In the meanwhile, what with the crowd on the platform and the crowd outside the barrier, and what with the hustling and pushing at the point where the tickets were taken, we lost sight of the old lady and her niece.

"What the deuce has become of *ma tante?*" exclaimed Müller, looking round.

But neither *ma tante* nor Mademoiselle Marie were anywhere to be seen. I suggested that they must have gone on in the omnibus or taken a *charrette*, and so have passed us unperceived.

"And after all," I added, "we didn't want to enter upon an indissoluble union with them for the rest of the day. *Ma tante's* deafness is not entertaining, and *la petite* Marie has nothing to say."

"*La petite* Marie is uncommonly pretty, though," said Müller. "I mean to dance a quadrille with her by-and-by, I promise you."

"*À la bonne heure!* We shall be sure to chance upon them again before long."

We had come by this time to a group of pretty villa-residences with high garden walls and little shady side-lanes leading down to the river. Then came a church and more houses; then an open Place; and suddenly we found ourselves in the midst of the fair.

It was just like any other of the hundred and one fêtes that take place every summer in

the environs of Paris. There was a merry-go-round and a greasy pole; there was a juggler who swallowed knives and ribbons; there were fortune-tellers without number; there were dining-booths, and drinking-booths, and dancing-booths; there were acrobats, organ-boys with monkeys, and Savoyards with white mice; there were stalls for the sale of cakes, fruit, sweetmeats, toys, combs, cheap jewelry, glass, crockery, boots and shoes, holy-water vessels, rosaries, medals, and little coloured prints of saints and martyrs; there were brass bands, and stringed bands, and ballad-singers everywhere; and there was an atmosphere compounded of dust, tobacco-smoke, onions, musk, and every objectionable perfume under heaven.

"Dine at the Restaurant de l'Empire, Messieurs," shouted a shabby touter in a blouse, thrusting a greasy card into our faces. "Three dishes, a dessert, a half-bottle, and a band of music, for one franc-fifty. The cheapest dinner in the fair!"

"The cheapest dinner in the fair is at the Belle Gabrielle!" cried another. "We'll

give you for the same money soup, fish, two dishes, a dessert, a half-bottle, and take your photograph into the bargain!"

"Bravo! *mon vieux*—you first poison them with your dinner, and then provide photographs for the widows and children," retorts touter number one. "That's justice, anyhow."

Whereupon touter number two shrieks out a torrent of abuse, and we push on, leaving them to settle their differences after their own fashion.

At the next booth we are accosted by a burly fellow daubed to the eyes with red and blue paint, and dressed as an Indian chief.

"*Entrez, entrez, Messieurs et Mesdames,*" he cries, flourishing a war-spear some nine feet in length. "Come and see the wonderful Peruvian maiden of Tanjore, with webbed fingers and toes, her mouth in the back of her head, and her eyes in the soles of her feet! Only four sous each, and an opportunity that will never occur again!"

"Only fifty centimes!" shouts another

public orator; "the most ingenious little machine ever invented! Goes into the waistcoat pocket—is wound up every twenty-four hours—tells the day of the month, the day of the year, the age of the moon, the state of the Bourse, the bank rate of discount, the quarter from which the wind is blowing, the price of new-laid eggs in Paris and the provinces, the rate of mortality in the Fee-jee islands, and the state of your sweetheart's affections!"

A little further on, by dint of much elbowing, we made our way into a crowded booth where, for the modest consideration of two sous per head, might be seen a Boneless Youth and an Ashantee King. The performances were half over when we went in. The Boneless Youth had gone through his feats of agility, and was lying on a mat in a corner of the stage, the picture of limp incapability. The Ashantee monarch was just about to make his appearance. Meanwhile, a little man in fleshings and a cocked hat addressed the audience.

"Messieurs and Mesdames—I have the

honour to announce that Caraba Radokala, King of Ashantee, will next appear before you. This terrific native sovereign was taken captive by that famous Dutch navigator the Mynheer Van Dunk, in his last voyage round the globe. Van Dunk, having brought his prisoner to Europe in an iron cage, sold him to the English government in 1840; who sold him again to Milord Barnum, the great American philanthropist, in 1842; who sold him again to Franconi of the Cirque Olympique; who finally sold him to me. At the time of his capture, Caraba Radokala was the most treacherous, barbarous, and sanguinary monster upon record. He had three hundred and sixty-five wives —a wife, you observe, for every day in the year. He lived exclusively upon human flesh, and consumed, when in good health, one baby per diem. His palace in Ashantee was built entirely of the skulls and leg bones of his victims. He is now, however, much less ferocious; and, though he feeds on live pigeons, rabbits, dogs, mice, and the like, he has not tasted human flesh since his

captivity. He is also heavily ironed. The distinguished company need therefore entertain no apprehensions. Pierre—draw the bolt, and let his majesty loose!"

A savage roar was now heard, followed by a rattling of chains. Then the curtains were suddenly drawn back, and the Ashantee king—crowned with a feather head-dress, loaded with red and blue war-paint, and chained from ankle to ankle—bounded on the stage.

Seeing the audience before him, he uttered a terrific howl. The front rows were visibly agitated. Several young women faintly screamed.

The little man in the cocked hat rushed to the front, protesting that the ladies had no reason to be alarmed. Caraba Radokala, if not wantonly provoked, was now quite harmless—a little irritable, perhaps, from being waked too suddenly—would be as gentle as a lamb, if given something to eat:—"Pierre, quiet his majesty with a pigeon!"

Pierre, a lank lad in motley, hereupon

appeared with a live pigeon, which immediately escaped from his hands and perched on the top of the proscenium. Caraba Radokala yelled; the little man in the cocked hat raved; and Pierre, in default of more pigeons, contritely reappeared with a lump of raw beef, into which his majesty ravenously dug his royal teeth. The pigeon, meanwhile, dressed its feathers and looked complacently down, as if used to the incident.

"Having fed, Caraba Radokala will now be quite gentle and good-humoured," said the showman. "If any lady desires to shake hands with him, she may do so with perfect safety. Will any lady embrace the opportunity?"

A faint sound of tittering was heard in various parts of the booth; but no one came forward.

"Will *no* lady be persuaded? Well, then, is there any gentleman present who speaks Ashantee?"

Müller gave me a dig with his elbow, and started to his feet.

"Yes," he replied, loudly. "I do."

Every head was instantly turned in our direction.

The showman collapsed with astonishment. Even the captive, despite his ignorance of the French tongue, looked considerably startled.

"*Comment!*" stammered the cocked hat. "Monsieur speaks Ashantee?"

"Fluently."

"Is it permitted to enquire how and when monsieur acquired this very unusual accomplishment?"

"I have spoken Ashantee from my infancy," replied Müller, with admirable aplomb. "I was born at sea, brought up in an undiscovered island, twice kidnapped by hostile tribes before attaining the age of ten years, and have lived among savage nations all my life."

A murmur of admiration ran through the audience, and Müller became, for the time, an object of livelier interest than Caraba Radokala himself. Seeing this, the indignant monarch executed a warlike *pas*, and rattled his chains fiercely.

"In that case, monsieur, you had better come upon the stage, and speak to his majesty," said the showman reluctantly.

"With all the pleasure in life."

"But I warn you that his temper is uncertain."

"Bah!" said Müller, working his way round through the crowd, "I'm not afraid of his temper."

"As monsieur pleases—but, if monsieur offends him, *I* will not be answerable for the consequences."

"All right—give us a hand up, *mon vieux!*"

And Müller, having clambered upon the stage, made a bow to the audience and a salaam to his majesty.

"Chickahominy chowdar bang," said he, by way of opening the conversation.

The ex-king of Ashantee scowled, folded his arms, and maintained a haughty silence.

"Hic hac horum, high cockalorum," continued Müller, with exceeding suavity.

The captive monarch stamped impatiently, ground his teeth, but still made no reply.

"Monsieur had better not aggravate him," said the showman.

"On the contrary—I am overwhelming him with civilities. Now observe—I condole with him upon his melancholy position; I enquire after his wives and children; and I remark how uncommonly well he is looking."

And with this, he made another salaam, smiled persuasively, and said—

"Alpha, beta, gamma, delta—chin-chin—Potz tausend!—Erin-go-bragh!"

"Borrioboolobah!" shrieked his majesty, apparently stung to desperation.

"Rocofoco!" retorted Müller promptly.

But as if this last was more than any Ashantee temper could bear, Caraba Rodokala clenched both his fists, set his teeth hard, and charged down upon Müller like a wild elephant. Being met, however, by a well-planted blow between the eyes, he went down like a ninepin—picked himself up,—rushed in again, and, being forcibly seized and held back by the cocked hat, Pierre of the pigeons, and a third man who came

tumbling up precipitately from somewhere behind the stage, vented his fury, in a torrent of very highly civilized French oaths.

"Eh, *sacredieu*!" he cried, shaking his fist in Müller's face, "I've not done with you yet, *diable de galerien!*"

Whereupon there burst forth a general roar—a roar like the "inextinguishable laughter" of Olympus.

"*Tiens!*" said Müller, "his majesty speaks French almost as well as I speak Ashantee!"

"*Bourreau! Brigand! Assassin!*" shrieked his Ferocity, as his friends hustled him off the stage.

The curtains then fell together again; and the audience, still laughing vociferously, dispersed with cries of "Vive Caraba Rodokala!" "Kind remembrances to the Queens of Ashantee!" "What's the latest news from home?" "Borrioboolobah—ah—ah!"

Elbowing our way out with the crowd, we now plunged once more into the press of the fair. Here our old friends the dancing dogs of the Champs Elysées, and the familiar

charlatan of the Place du Châtelet with his chariot and barrel-organ, transported us from Ashantee to Paris. Next we came to a temporary shooting-gallery, adorned over the entrance with a spirited cartoon of a Tyrolean sharpshooter; and then to an exhibition of cosmoramas; and presently to a weighing-machine, in which a great, rosy-cheeked, laughing Normandy peasant girl, with her high cap, blue skirt, massive gold cross and heavy earrings, was in the act of being weighed.

"*Tiens! Mam'selle est joliment solide!*" remarks a saucy bystander, as the owner of the machine piles on weight after weight.

"Perhaps if I had no more brains than m'sieur, I should weigh as light!" retorts the damsel, with a toss of her high cap.

"*Pardon!* it is not a question of brains—it is a question of hearts," interposes an elderly exquisite in a white hat. "Mam'selle has captured so many that she is completely overweighted."

"Twelve stone six ounces," pronounces the owner of the machine, adjusting the last weight.

Whereupon there is a burst of ironical applause, and the big *paysanne*, half laughing, half angry, walks off, exclaiming, "*Eh bien! tant mieux!* I've no mind to be a scarecrow—*moi!*"

By this time we have both had enough of the fair, and are glad to make our way out of the crowd and down to the river-side. Here we find lovers strolling in pairs along the towing-path; family groups pic-nic-ing in the shade; boats and punts for hire; and a swimming-match just coming off, of which all that is visible are two black heads bobbing up and down along the middle of the stream.

"And now, *mon ami*, what do you vote for?" asks Müller. "Boating or fishing? or both? or neither?"

"Both, if you like—but I never caught anything in my life."

"The pleasure of fishing, I take it," says Müller, "is not in the fish you catch, but in the fish you miss. The fish you catch is a poor little wretch, worth neither the trouble of landing, cooking, nor eating; but the fish

you miss is always the finest fellow you ever saw in your life!"

"*Allons donc*! I know, then, which of us two will have most of the pleasure to-day," I reply, laughing. "But how about the expense?"

To which Müller, with a noble recklessness, answers:—

"Oh, hang the expense! Here, boatman! a boat *à quatre rames*, and some fishing-tackle—by the hour."

Now it was undoubtedly a fine sentiment this of Müller's, and had we but fetched my two Napoleons before starting I should have applauded it to the echo; but when I considered that something very nearly approaching to a franc had already filtered out of our pockets in passing through the fair, and that the hour of dinner was looming somewhat indefinitely in the distance, I confess that my soul became disquieted within me.

"Don't forget, for heaven's sake," I said, "that we must keep something for dinner!"

"My dear fellow," he replied, "I have

already a tremendous appetite for dinner—that *is* something."

After this, I resigned myself to whatever might happen.

We then rowed up the river for about a mile beyond Courbevoie, moored our boat to a friendly willow, put our fishing-tackle together, and composed ourselves for the gentle excitement that waits upon the gudgeon and the minnow.

"I haven't yet had a single nibble," said Müller, when we had been sitting to our work for something less than ten minutes.

"Hush!" I said. "You mustn't speak, you know."

"True—I had forgotten. I'll sing instead. Fishes, I have been told, are fond of music.

> 'Fanfan, je vous aimerais bien;
> Contre vous je n'ai nul caprice;
> Vous êtes gentil, j'en convien . . .'"

"Come, now!" I exclaimed pettishly, "this is really too bad. I had a bite—a most decided bite—and if you had only kept quiet" . . . .

"Nonsense, my dear fellow! I tell you

again—and I have it on the best authority —fishes like music. Did you never hear of Arion? Have you forgotten about the Syrens? Believe me, your gudgeon nibbled because I sang him to the surface—just as the snakes come out for the song of the snake-charmer. I'll try again!"

And with this he began:—

"Jeannette est une brune
Qui demeure à Pantin,
Où toute sa fortune
Est un petit jardin!"

"Well, if you go on like that, all I have to say is that not a fish will come within half a mile of our bait," said I, with tranquil despair.

"Alas! *mon cher*, I am grieved to observe in your otherwise estimable character, a melancholy want of faith," replied Müller. "Without faith, what is friendship? What is angling? What is matrimony? Now, I tell you that with regard to the finny tribe, the more I charm them, the more enthusiastically they will flock to be caught. We shall have a miraculous draught in a few minutes, if you are but patient."

And then he began again:—

"Mimi Pinson est une blonde,
Une blonde que l'on connaît.
Elle n'a qu'une robe au monde,
Landerirette!
Et qu'un bonnet."

I laid aside my rod, folded my arms, and when he had done, applauded ironically.

"Very good," I said. "I understand the situation. We are here, at some—indeed, I may say, considering the state of our exchequer, at a considerable mutual expense; not to catch fish, but to afford the Herr Müller an opportunity of exercising his extensive memory and his limited baritone voice. The entertainment is not without its *agréments*, but I find it dear at the price."

"*Tiens*, Arbuthnot! let us fish seriously. I promise not to open my lips again till you have caught something."

"Then, seriously, I believe you would have to be silent the whole night, and all I should catch would be the rheumatism. I am the worst angler in the world, and the most unlucky."

"Really and truly?"

"Really and truly. And you?"

"As bad as yourself. If a tolerably large and energetic fish did me the honour to swallow my bait, the probability is that he would catch me. I certainly shouldn't know what to do with him."

"Then the present question is—what shall we do with ourselves?"

"I vote that we row up as far as yonder bend in the river, just to see what lies beyond; and then back to Courbevoie."

"Heaven only grant that by that time we shall have enough money left for dinner!" I murmured with a sigh.

We rowed up the river as far as the first bend, a distance of about half a mile; and then we rowed on as far as the next bend. Then we turned, and, resting on our oars, drifted slowly back with the current. The evening was indescribably brilliant and serene. The sky was cloudless, of a greenish blue, and full of light. The river was clear as glass. We could see the flaccid water-weeds swaying languidly with the current far below, and now and then a shoal of tiny

fish shooting along half-way between the weeds and the surface. A rich fringe of purple iris, spear-leafed sagittarius, and tufted meadow-sweet (each blossom a bouquet on a slender thyrsus) bordered the towing-path and filled the air with perfume. Here the meadows lay open to the water's edge; a little farther on, they were shut off by a close rampart of poplars and willows whose leaves, already yellowed by autumn, were now fiery in the sunset. Joyous bands of gnats, like wild little intoxicated mænads, circled and hummed about our heads as we drifted slowly on; while, far away and mellowed by distance, we heard the brazen music of the fair.

We were both silent. Müller pulled out a small sketch-book and made a rapid study of the scene—the reach in the river; the wooded banks; the green flats traversed by long lines of stunted pollards; the church-tops and roofs of Courbevoie beyond.

Presently a soft voice, singing, broke upon the silence. Müller stopped involuntarily, pencil in hand. I held my breath, and listened. The tune was flowing and sweet;

and as our boat drifted on, the words of the singer became audible.

"O miroir ondoyant!
Je rève en te voyant
Harmonie et lumière,
O ma rivière,
O ma belle rivière!

"On voit se réfléchir
Dans ses eaux les nuages;
Elle semble dormir
Entre les pâturages
Où paissent les grands bœufs
Et les grasses genisses.
Aux pâtres amoureux
Que ses bords sont propices!"

"A woman's voice," said Müller. "Dupont's words and music. She must be young and pretty . . . where has she hidden herself?"

The unseen singer, meanwhile, went on with another verse.

"Près des iris du bord,
Sous une berge haute,
La carpe aux reflets d'or
Où le barbeau ressaute,
Les goujons font le guet,
L'Ablette qui scintille
Fuit le dent du brochet;
Au fond rampe l'anguille!

"O miroir ondoyant!
Je rève en te voyant
Harmonie et lumière,
O ma rivière,
O ma belle rivière!"

"Look!" said Müller. "Do you not see them yonder—two women under the trees? By Jupiter! it's *ma tante* and *la petite* Marie!

Saying which, he flung himself upon his oars and began pulling vigorously towards the shore.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *That terrible Müller.*

LA petite Marie broke off at the sound of our oars, and blushed a becoming rose-colour.

"Will these ladies do us the honour of letting us row them back to Courbevoie?" said Müller, running our boat close in against the sedges, and pulling off his hat as respectfully as if they were duchesses.

Mademoiselle Marie repeated the invitation to her aunt, who accepted it at once.

"*Très volontiers, très volontiers, messieurs,*" she said, smiling and nodding. "We have rambled out so far—so far! And I am not as young as I was forty years ago. *Ah, mon Dieu!* how my old bones ache! Give me

thy hand, Marie, and thank the gentlemen for their politeness."

So Mam'selle Marie helped her aunt to rise, and we steadied the boat close under the bank, at a point where the interlacing roots of a couple of sallows made a kind of natural step by means of which they could easily get down.

"Oh, dear! dear! it will not turn over, will it, my dear young man? *Ciel!* I am slipping . . . Ah, *Dieu merci!*—Marie, *ma chère enfant*, pray be careful not to jump in, or you will upset us all!"

And *ma tante*, somewhat tremulous from the ordeal of embarking, settled down in her place, while Müller lifted Mam'selle Marie into the boat, as if she had been a child. I then took the oars, leaving him to steer; and so we pursued our way towards Courbevoie.

"Mam'selle has of course seen the fair?" said Müller, from behind the old lady's back.

"No, monsieur."

"No! Is it possible?"

"There was so much crowd, monsieur, and such a noise . . . we were quite too much afraid to venture in."

"Would you be afraid, mam'selle, to venture with me?"

"I—I do not know, monsieur."

"Ah, mam'selle, you might be very sure that I would take good care of you!"

"*Mais . . . monsieur*" . . .

"These gentlemen, I see, have been angling," said the old lady, addressing me very graciously. "Have you caught many fish?"

"None at all, madame," I replied, loudly.

"*Tiens!* so many as that?"

"*Pardon*, madame," I shouted at the top of my voice. "We have caught nothing—nothing at all."

*Ma tante* smiled blandly.

"Ah, yes," she said; "and you will have them cooked presently for dinner, *n'est ce pas?* There is no fish so fresh, and so well-flavoured, as the fish of our own catching."

"Will madame and mam'selle do us the

honour to taste our fish and share our modest dinner?" said Müller, leaning forward in his seat in the stern, and delivering his invitation close into the old lady's ear.

To which *ma tante*, with a readiness of hearing for which no one would have given her credit, replied:—

"But—but monsieur is very polite—if we should not be inconveniencing these gentlemen" . . .

"We shall be charmed, madame—we shall be honoured!"

"*Eh bien*! with pleasure, then—Marie, my child, thank the gentlemen for their amiable invitation."

I was thunderstruck. I looked at Müller to see if he had suddenly gone out of his senses. Mam'selle Marie, however, was infinitely amused.

"*Fi donc*! monsieur," she said. "You have no fish. I heard the other gentleman say so."

"The other gentleman, mam'selle," replied Müller, "is an Englishman, and

troubled with the spleen. You must not mind anything he says."

Troubled with the spleen! I believe myself to be as even-tempered and as ready to fall in with a joke as most men; but I should have liked at that moment to punch Franz Müller's head. Gracious heavens! into what a position he had now brought us! What was to be done? How were we to get out of it? It was now just seven; and we had already been upon the water for more than an hour. What should we have to pay for the boat? And when we had paid for the boat, how much money should we have left to pay for the dinner? Not for our own dinners—ah, no! For *ma tante's* dinner (and *ma tante* had a hungry eye); and for *la petite* Marie's dinner; and *la petite* Marie, plump, rosy, and well-liking, looked as if she might have a capital appetite upon occasion! Should we have as much as two and a half francs? I doubted it. And then, in the absence of a miracle, what could we do with two and a half francs, if we had them? A miserable sum!

—convertible, perhaps, into as much bouilli, bread and cheese, and thin country wine as might have satisfied our own hunger in a prosaic and commonplace way; but for four persons, two of them women! . . .

And this was not the worst of it. I thought I knew Müller well enough by this time to feel that he would entirely dismiss this minor consideration of ways and means; that he would order the dinner as recklessly as if we had twenty francs apiece in our pockets; and that he would not only order it, but eat it and preside at it with all the gaiety and audacity in life.

Then would come the horrible retribution of the bill!

I felt myself turn red and hot at the mere thought of it.

Then a dastardly idea insinuated itself into my mind. I had my return-ticket in my waistcoat-pocket:—what if I slipped away presently to the station and went back to Paris by the next train, leaving my clever friend to improvise his way out of his own scrape as best he could?

In the meanwhile, as I was rowing with the stream, we soon got back to Courbevoie.

"*Are* you mad?" I said, as, having landed the ladies, Müller and I delivered up the boat to its owner.

"Didn't I admit it, two or three hours ago?" he replied. "I wonder you don't get tired, *mon cher*, of asking the same question so often."

"Four francs, fifty centimes, Messieurs," said the boatman, having made fast his boat to the landing-place.

"Four francs, fifty centimes!" I echoed, in dismay.

Even Müller looked aghast.

"My good fellow," he said, "do you take us for coiners?"

"Hire of boat, two francs the hour. These gentlemen have been out nearly one hour and a half—three francs. Hire of bait and fishing-tackle, one franc fifty. Total, four francs and a half," replied the boatman, putting out a great brown palm.

Müller, who was acting as cashier and

paymaster, pulled out his purse, deposited one solitary half-franc in the middle of that brown palm, and suggested that the boatman and he should toss up for the remaining four francs—or race for them—or play for them—or fight for them. The boatman, however, indignantly rejected each successive proposal, and, being paid at last, retired with a *decrescendo* of oaths.

"*Tiens!*" said Müller, reflectively. "We have but one franc left. One franc, two sous, and a centime. *Vive la France!*"

"And you have actually asked that wretched old woman and her niece to dinner!"

"And I have actually solicited that excellent and admirable woman, Madame Marotte, relict of the late lamented Jacques Marotte, umbrella maker, of number one hundred and two, Rue du Faubourg St. Denis, and her beautiful and accomplished niece, Mademoiselle Marie Charpentier, to honour us with their company this evening. *Dis-donc*, what shall we give them for dinner?"

"Precisely what you invited them to, I should guess—the fish we caught this afternoon."

"Agreed. And what else?"

"Say—a dish of invisible greens, and a phœnix *à la Marengo.*"

"You are funny, *mon cher.*"

"Then, for fear I should become too funny—good afternoon."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I have no mind to dine first, and be kicked out of doors afterwards. It is one of those aids to digestion that I can willingly dispense with."

"But if I guarantee that the dinner shall be paid for—money down!"

"Tra la la!"

"You don't believe me? Well, come and see."

With this, he went up to Madame Marotte, who, with her niece, had sat down on a bench under a walnut-tree close by, waiting our pleasure.

"Would not these ladies prefer to rest here, while we seek for a suitable restaurant

and order the dinner?" said Müller insinuatingly.

The old lady looked somewhat blank. She was not too tired to go on—thought it a pity to bring us all the way back again—would do, however, as "*ces messieurs*" pleased; and so was left sitting under the walnut-tree, reluctant and disconsolate.

"*Tiens! mon enfant,*" I heard her say as we turned away, "suppose they don't come back again!"

We had promised to be gone not longer than twenty minutes, or at most half an hour. Müller led the way straight to the *Toison d'Or.*

I took him by the arm as we neared the gate.

"Steady, steady, *mon gaillard,*" I said. "We don't order our dinner, you know, till we've found the money to pay for it."

"True—but suppose I go in here to look for it?"

"Into the restaurant garden?"

"Precisely."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Petit Courier Illustré.*

THE *Toison d'Or* was but a modest little establishment as regarded the house, but it was surrounded on three sides by a good-sized garden overlooking the river. Here, in the trellised arbours which lined the lawn on either side, those customers who preferred the open air could take their dinners, coffees, and absinthes *al fresco.*

The scene when we arrived was at its gayest. There were dinners going on in every arbour; waiters running distractedly to and fro with trays and bottles; two women, one with a guitar, the other with a tambourine, singing under a tree in the middle of the garden; while in the

air there reigned an exhilarating confusion of sounds and smells impossible to describe.

We went in. Müller paused, looked round, captured a passing waiter, and asked for Monsieur le propriétaire. The waiter pointed over his shoulder towards the house, and breathlessly rushed on his way.

Müller at once led the way into a salon on the ground-floor looking over the garden.

Here we found ourselves in a large low room containing some thirty or forty tables, and fitted up after the universal restaurant pattern, with cheap-looking glasses, rows of hooks, and spittoons in due number. The air was heavy with the combined smells of many dinners, and noisy with the clatter of many tongues. Behind the fruits, cigars, and liqueur bottles that decorated the *comptoir* sat a plump, black-eyed little woman in a gorgeous cap and a red silk dress. This lady welcomed us with a bewitch-

ing smile and a gracious inclination of the head.

"*Ces messieurs,*" she said, "will find a vacant table yonder, by the window."

Müller bowed majestically.

"Madame," he said, "I wish to see Monsieur le propriétaire."

The dame de comptoir looked very uneasy.

"If Monsieur has any complaint to make," she said, "he can make it to me."

"Madame, I have none."

"Or if it has reference to the ordering of a dinner" . . . .

Müller smiled loftily.

"Dinner, Madame," he said, with a disdainful gesture, "is but one of the accidents common to humanity. A trifle! A trifle always humiliating—sometimes inconvenient—occasionally impossible. No, Madame, mine is a serious mission; a mission of the highest importance, both socially and commercially. May I beg that you

will have the goodness to place my card in the hands of Monsieur le propriétaire, and say that I request the honour of five minutes' interview."

The little woman's eyes had all this time been getting rounder and blacker. She was evidently confounded by my friend's grandiloquence.

"*Ah! mon Dieu! M'sieur*," she said, nervously, "my husband is in the kitchen. It is a busy day with us, you understand—but I will send for him."

And she forthwith despatched a waiter for "Monsieur Choucru."

Müller seized me by the arm.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, in a very audible aside, "did you hear? She is his wife! She is Madame Choucru!"

"Well, and what of that?"

"What of that, indeed? *Mais, mon ami*, how can you ask the question? Have you no eyes? Look at her! Such a remarkably handsome woman—such a *tournure*—such eyes—such a fig-

ure for an illustration! Only conceive the effect of Madame Choucru—in medallion!"

"Oh, magnificent!" I replied. "Magnificent—in medallion."

But I could not, for the life of me, imagine what he was driving at.

"And it would make the fortune of the *Toison d'Or*," he added solemnly.

To which I replied that it would undoubtedly do so.

Monsieur Choucru now came upon the scene; a short, rosy, round-faced little man in a white flat cap and bibbed apron—like an elderly cherub that had taken to cookery. He hung back upon the threshold, wiping his forehead, and evidently unwilling to show himself in his shirt-sleeves.

"Here, *mon bon*," cried Madame, who was by this time crimson with gratified vanity, and in a fever of curiosity; "this way—the gentleman is waiting to speak to you!"

Monsieur the cook and proprietor shuffled his feet to and fro in the doorway, but came no nearer.

"*Parbleu!*" he said, "if M'sieur's business is not urgent."

"It is extremely urgent, Monsieur Choucru," replied Müller; "and, moreover, it is not so much my business as it is yours."

"Ah bah! if it is my business, then, it may stand over till to-morrow," replied the little man, impatiently. "To-day I have eighty dinners on hand, and with M'sieur's permission." . . . .

But Müller strode to the door and caught him by the shoulder.

"No, Monsieur Choucru," he said sternly, "I will not let you ruin yourself by putting off till to-morrow what can only be done to-day. I have come here, Monsieur Choucru, to offer you fame. Fame and fortune, Monsieur Choucru!—and I will not suffer you, for the sake of a few miserable dinners, to turn your back

upon the most brilliant moment of your life!"

"*Mais M'sieur*—explain yourself" . . . stammered the propriétaire.

"You know who I am, Monsieur Choucru?"

"No, M'sieur—not in the least."

"I am Müller—Franz Müller—landscape painter, portrait painter, historical painter, caricaturist, artist *en chef* to the *Petit Courier Illustré.*"

"*Hein! M'sieur est peintre!*"

"Yes, Monsieur Choucru—and I offer you my protection."

Monsieur Choucru scratched his ear, and smiled doubtfully.

"Now listen, Monsieur Choucru—I am here to-day in the interests of the *Petit Courier Illustré.* I take the Courbevoie fête for my subject. I sketch the river, the village, the principal features of the scene; and on Saturday my designs are in the hands of all Paris. Do you understand me?"

"I understand that M'sieur is all this time talking to me of his own business, while mine, *là bas*, is standing still!" exclaimed the propriétaire, in an agony of impatience. "I have the honour to wish M'sieur good day."

But Müller seized him again, and would not let him escape.

"Not so fast, Monsieur Choucru," he said; "not so fast! Will you answer me one question before you go?"

"*Eh, mon Dieu!* Monsieur" . . . .

"Will you tell me, Monsieur Choucru, what is to prevent me from giving a view of the best restaurant in Courbevoie?"

Madame Choucru, from behind the *comptoir*, uttered a little scream.

"A design in the *Petit Courier Illustré*, I need scarcely tell you," pursued Müller, with indescribable pomposity, "is in itself sufficient to make the fortune not only of an establishment, but of a neighbourhood. I am about to make Courbevoie the fashion.

The sun of Asnières, of Montmorency, of Enghien has set—the sun of Courbevoie is about to rise. My sketches will produce an unheard-of effect. All Paris will throng to your fêtes next Sunday and Monday—all Paris, with its inexhaustible appetite for *bifteck aux pommes frîtes*—all Paris with its unquenchable thirst for absinthe and Bavarian beer! Now, Monsieur Choucru, do you begin to understand me?"

"*Mais*, Monsieur, I—I think . . . ."

"You think you do, Monsieur Choucru? Very good. Then will you please to answer me one more question. What is to prevent me from conferring fame, fortune, and other benefits too numerous to mention, on your excellent neighbour at the corner of the Place—Monsieur Coquille of the Restaurant *Croix de Malte?*"

Monsieur Choucru scratched his ear again, stared helplessly at his wife, and said nothing. Madame looked grave.

"Are we to treat this matter on the footing of a business transaction, Monsieur?" she asked, somewhat sharply. "Because,

if so, let Monsieur at once name his price for the . . . ."

"'PRICE,' Madame!" interrupted Müller, with a start of horror. "Gracious powers! this to me—to Franz Müller of the *Petit Courier Illustré*! No, Madame—you mistake me—you wound me—you touch the honour of the Fine Arts! Madame, I am incapable of selling my patronage."

Madame clasped her hands; raised her voice; rolled her black eyes; did everything but burst into tears. She was shocked to have offended Monsieur! She was profoundly desolated! She implored a thousand pardons! And then, like a true Frenchwoman of business, she brought back the conversation to the one important point:—since money was not in question, upon what consideration would Monsieur accord his preference to the *Toison d'Or* instead of to the *Croix de Malte?*

Müller bowed, laid his hand upon his heart, and said:—

"I will do it, *pour les beaux yeux de Madame.*"

And then, in graceful recognition of the little man's rights as owner of the eyes in question, he bowed to Monsieur Choucru.

Madame was inexpressibly charmed. Monsieur smiled, fidgetted, and cast longing glances towards the door.

"I have eighty dinners on hand," he began again, "and if M'sieur will excuse me . . . ."

"One moment more, my dear Monsieur Choucru," said Müller, slipping his hand affectionately through the little man's arm. "For myself, as I have already told you, I can accept nothing—but I am bound in honour not to neglect the interests of the journal I represent. You will of course wish to express your sense of the compliment paid to your house by adding your name to the subscription list of the *Petit Courier Illustré?* "

"Oh, by—by all means—with pleasure," faltered the propriétaire.

"For how many copies, Monsieur Choucru? Shall we say—six?"

Monsieur looked at Madame. Madame

nodded. Müller took out his pocket-book, and waited, pencil in hand.

"Eh—*parbleu*!—let it be for six, then," said Monsieur Choucru, somewhat reluctantly.

Müller made the entry, shut up the pocket-book, and shook hands boisterously with his victim.

"My dear Monsieur Choucru," he said, "I cannot tell you how gratifying this is to my feelings, or with what disinterested satisfaction I shall make your establishment known to the Parisian public. You shall be immortalised, my dear fellow—positively immortalized!"

"*Bien obligé, M'sieur—bien obligé.* Will you not let my wife offer you a glass of liqueure?"

"Liqueure, *mon cher*!" exclaimed Müller, with an outburst of frank cordiality—"hang liqueure!—WE'LL DINE WITH YOU!"

"Monsieur shall be heartily welcome to the best dinner the *Toison d'Or* can send up; and his friend also," said Madame, with her sweetest smile.

"Ah, Madame!"

"And M'sieur Choucru shall make you one of his famous cheese soufflés. *Tiens, mon bon*, go down and prepare a cheese soufflé for two."

Müller smote his forehead distractedly.

"For two!" he cried. "Heavens! I had forgotten my aunt and my cousin!"

Madame looked up inquiringly.

"Monsieur has forgotten something?"

"Two somethings, Madame—two somebodies! My aunt—my excellent and admirable maternal aunt,—and my cousin. We left them sitting under a tree by the river-side, more than half an hour ago. But the fault, Madame, is yours."

"How, Monsieur?"

"Yes; for in your charming society I forget the ties of family and the laws of politeness. But I hasten to fetch my forgotten relatives. With what pleasure they will share your amiable hospitality! *Au revoir*, Madame. In ten minutes we shall be with you again!"

Madame Choucru looked grave. She

had not bargained to entertain a party of four; yet she dared not disoblige the *Petit Courier Illustré.* She had no time, however, to demur to the arrangement; for Müller, ingeniously taking her acquiescence for granted, darted out of the room without waiting for an answer.

"Miserable man!" I exclaimed, as soon as we were outside the doors, "what will you do now?"

"Do! Why, fetch my admirable maternal aunt and my interesting cousin, to be sure."

"But you have raised a dinner under false pretences!"

"I, *mon cher?* Not a bit of it."

"Have you, then, really anything to do with the *Petit Courier Illustré?*"

"The Editor of the *Petit Courier Illustré* is one of the best fellows in the world, and occasionally (when my pockets represent that vacuum which Nature very properly abhors) he advances me a couple of Napoleons. I wipe out the score from time to time by furnishing a design for the paper.

Now to-day, you see, I'm in luck. I shall pay off two obligations at once—to say nothing of Monsieur Choucru's six-fold subscription to the P.C., on which the publishers will allow me a douceur of thirty francs. Now, confess that I'm a man of genius!"

In less than a quarter of an hour we were all four established round one of Madame Choucru's comfortable little dining-tables, in a snug recess at the farthest end of the salon. Here, being well out of reach of our hostess's black eyes, Müller assumed all the airs of a liberal entertainer. He hung up *ma cousine's* bonnet; fetched a footstool for *ma tante;* criticised the sauces; presided over the wine; cut jokes with the waiter; and pretended to have ordered every dish beforehand. The stewed kidneys with mushrooms were provided especially for Madame Marotte; the fricandeau was selected in honour of Mam'selle Marie (had he not an innate presentiment that she loved fricandeau?); and as for the soles *au gratin*, he swore, in defiance of probability and all the laws of nature, that they were the very fish

we had just caught in the Seine. By-and-by came Monsieur Choucru's famous cheese *soufflé;* and then, with a dish of fruit, four cups of coffee, and four glasses of liqueure, the banquet came to an end.

As we sat at dessert, Müller pulled out his book and pencilled a rapid but flattering sketch of the dining-room interior, developing a perspective as long as the Rue de Rivoli, and a *mobilier* at least equal in splendour to that of the *Trois Frères.*

At sight of this *chef d'œuvre,* Madame Choucru was moved almost to tears. Ah, heaven! if Monsieur could only figure to himself her admiration for his *beau talent!* But alas! that was impossible—as impossible as that Monsieur Choucru should ever repay this unheard-of obligation!

Müller laid his hand upon his heart, and bowed profoundly.

"Ah! Madame," he said, "it is not to Monsieur Choucru that I look for repayment—it is to you."

"To me, Monsieur? *Dieu merci! Monsieur se moque de moi!*"

And the Dame de Comptoir, entrenched behind her fruits and liqueure bottles, shot a Parthian glance from under her black eyelashes, and made believe to blush.

"Yes, Madame, to you. I only ask permission to come again very soon, for the purpose of executing a little portrait of Madame—a little portrait which, alas! *must* fail to render adequate justice to such a multitude of charms."

And with this choice compliment, Müller bowed again, took his leave, bestowed a whole franc upon the astonished waiter, and departed from the *Toison d'Or* in an atmosphere of glory.

The fair, or rather that part of the fair where the dancers and diners most did congregate, was all ablaze with lights and noisy with brass bands as we came out. *Ma tante*, who was somewhat tired, and had been dozing for the last half hour over her coffee and liqueure, was impatient to get back to Paris. The fair Marie, who was not tired at all, confessed that she should enjoy a waltz above everything. While

Müller, who professed to be an animated time-table, swore that we were just too late for the ten minutes past ten train, and that there would be no other before eleven forty-five. So Madame Marotte was carried off, *bon gré, mal gré,* to a dancing-booth, where gentlemen were admitted on payment of forty centimes per head, and ladies went in free.

Here, despite the noise, the dust, the braying of an abominable band, the overwhelming smell of lamp-oil, and the clatter, not only of heavy walking-boots, but even of several pairs of sabôts upon an uneven floor of loosely-joined planks—*ma tante,* being disposed of in a safe corner, went soundly to sleep.

It was a large booth, somewhat over-full; and the company consisted mainly of Parisian blue-blouses, little foot-soldiers, grisettes (for there were grisettes in those days, and plenty of them), with a sprinkling of farm-boys and dairymaids from the villages round about. We found this select society caracoling round the booth in a thundering

galop, on first going in. After the galop, the conductor announced a *valse à deux temps*. The band struck up—one—two—three. Away went some thirty couples—away went Müller and the fair Marie—and away went the chronicler of this modest biography with a pretty little girl in green boots who waltzed remarkably well, and who deserted him in the middle of the dance for a hideous little French soldier about four foot and a half high.

After this rebuff (having learned, notwithstanding my friend's representations to the contrary, that a train ran from Courbevoie to Paris every half hour up till midnight) I slipped away, leaving Müller and *ma cousine* in the midst of a furious flirtation, and Madame Marotte fast asleep in her corner.

The clocks were just striking twelve as I passed under the archway leading to the Cité Bergère.

"*Tiens*!" said the fat concierge, as she gave me my key and my candle, "Monsieur has perhaps been to the theatre this evening? No!—to the country—to the fête at

Courbevoie! Ah, then, I'll be sworn that M'sieur has had plenty of fun!"

But had I had plenty of fun? That was the question. That Müller had had plenty of flirting and plenty of fun was a fact beyond the reach of doubt. But a flirtation, after all, unless in a one-act comedy, is not entertaining to the mere looker-on; and oh! must not those bridesmaids who sometimes accompany a happy couple in their wedding-tour, have a dreary time of it?

## CHAPTER IX.

### *The École de Natation.*

IT seemed to me that I had but just closed my eyes, when I was waked by a hand upon my shoulder, and a voice calling me by my name. I started up to find the early sunshine pouring in at the window, and Franz Müller standing by my bedside.

"*Tiens!*" said he. "How lovely are the slumbers of innocence! I was hesitating, *mon cher*, whether to wake or sketch you."

I muttered something between a growl and a yawn, to the effect that I should have been better satisfied if he had left me alone.

"You prefer everything that is basely self-indulgent, young man," replied Müller, making a divan of my bed, and coolly lighting his pipe under my very nose. "Con-

trary to all the laws of *bon camaraderie*, you stole away last night, leaving your unprotected friend in the hands of the enemy. And for what?—for the sake of a few hours' ignominious oblivion! Look at me—I have not been to bed all night, and I am as lively as a lobster in a lobster-pot."

"How did you get home?" I asked, rubbing my eyes; "and when?"

"I have not got home at all yet," replied my visitor. "I have come to breakfast with you first."

Just at this moment, the *pendule* in the adjoining room struck six.

"To breakfast!" I repeated. "At this hour?—you who never breakfast before midday!"

"True, *mon cher;* but then you see there are reasons. In the first place, we danced a little too long, and missed the last train, so I was obliged to bring the dear creatures back to Paris in a fiacre. In the second place, the driver was drunk, and the horse was groggy, and the fiacre was in the last stage of dilapidation. The powers below

only know how many hours we were on the road; for we all fell asleep, driver included, and never woke till we found ourselves at the Barrière de l'Étoile at dawn of day."

"Then what have you done with Madame Marotte and Mademoiselle Marie?"

"Deposited them at their own door in the Rue du Faubourg St. Denis, as was the bounden duty of a *preux chevalier*. But then, *mon cher*, I had no money; and having no money, I couldn't pay for the fiacre; so I drove on here—and here I am—and number One Thousand and Eleven is now at the door, waiting to be paid."

"The deuce he is!"

"So you see, sad as it was to disturb the slumbers of innocence, I couldn't possibly let you go on sleeping at the rate of two francs an hour."

"And what is the rate at which you have waked me?"

"Sixteen francs the fare, and something for the driver—say twenty in all."

"Then, my dear fellow, just open my desk and take one of the two Napoleons

you will see lying inside, and dismiss number One Thousand and Eleven without loss of time; and then . . . ."

"A thousand thanks! And then what?"

"Will you accept a word of sound advice?"

"Depends on whether it's pleasant to follow, *caro mio.*"

"Go home; get three or four hours' rest; and meet me in the Palais Royale about twelve for breakfast."

"In order that you may turn round and go to sleep again in comfort? No, young man, I will do nothing of the kind. You shall get up, instead, and we'll go down to Molino's."

"To Molino's?"

"Yes—don't you know Molino's?—the large swimming-school by the Pont Neuf. It's a glorious morning for a plunge in the Seine."

A plunge in the Seine! Now, given a warm bed, a chilly autumn morning, and a decided inclination to quote the words of the sluggard, and "slumber again," could

any proposition be more inopportune, savage, and alarming? I shuddered; I protested; I resisted; but in vain.

"I shall be up again in less time than it will take you to tell your beads, *mon gaillard*," said Müller the ferocious, as, having captured my Napoleon, he prepared to go down and liquidate with number One Thousand and Eleven. "And it's of no use to bolt me out, because I shall hammer away till you let me in, and that will wake your fellow-lodgers. So let me find you up, and ready for the fray."

And then, execrating Müller, and Molino, and Molino's bath, and Molino's customers, and all Molino's ancestors from the period of the deluge downwards, I reluctantly complied.

The air was brisk, the sky cloudless, the sun coldly bright; and the city wore that strange, breathless, magical look so peculiar to Paris at early morning. The shops were closed; the pavements deserted; the busy thoroughfares silent as the avenues of Père la Chaise. Yet how different from the early

stillness of London! London, before the world is up and stirring, looks dead, and sullen, and melancholy; but Paris lies all beautiful, and bright, and mysterious, with a look as of dawning smiles upon her face; and we know that she will wake presently, like the Sleeping Beauty, to sudden joyousness and activity.

Our road lay for a little way along the Boulevards, then down the Rue Vivienne, and through the Palais Royale to the quays; but long ere we came within sight of the river this magical calm had begun to break up. The shop-boys in the Palais Royale were already taking down the shutters—the great book-stall at the end of the Galerie Vitrée showed signs of wakefulness; and in the Place du Louvre there was already a detachment of brisk little foot-soldiers at drill. By the time we had reached the open line of the quays, the first omnibuses were on the road; the water-carriers were driving their carts and blowing their shrill little bugles; the washerwomen, hard at work in their gay, oriental-looking floating kiosques,

were hammering away, mallet in hand, and chattering like millions of magpies; and the early matin-bell was ringing to prayers as we passed the doors of St. Germain L'Auxerrois.

And now we were skirting the Quai de l'École, looking down upon the bath known in those days as Molino's—a huge, floating, quadrangular structure, surrounded by trellised arcades and rows of dressing-rooms, with a divan, a café restaurant, and a permanent corps of cooks and hair-dressers on the establishment. For your true Parisian has ever been wedded to his Seine, as the Venetian to his Adriatic; and the École de Natation was then, as now, a lounge, a reading-room, an adjunct of the clubs, and one of the great institutions of the capital.

Some bathers, earlier than ourselves, were already sauntering about the galleries in every variety of undress, from the simple *caleçon* to the gaudiest version of Turkish robe and Algerian *kepi*. Some were smoking; some reading the morning papers; some chatting in little knots; but as yet,

with the exception of two or three schoolboys, (called in the *argôt* of the bath, *moutards*) there were no swimmers in the water.

With some of these loungers Müller exchanged a nod or a few words as we passed along the platform; but shook hands cordially with a bronzed, stalwart man, dressed like a Venetian gondolier in the frontispiece to a popular ballad, with white trousers, blue jacket, anchor buttons, red sash, gold ear-rings, and great silver buckles in his shoes. Müller introduced this romantic-looking person to me as "Monsieur Barbet."

"My friend Monsieur Barbet," said he, "is the prince of swimming-masters. He is more at home in the water than on land, and knows more about swimming than a fish. He will calculate you the specific gravity of the heaviest German metaphysician at a glance, and is capable of floating even the works of Monsieur Thiers, if put to the test."

"Monsieur can swim?" said the master, addressing me with a nautical scrape.

"I think so," I replied.

"Many gentlemen think so," said Monsieur Barbet, "till they find themselves in the water."

"And many who wish to be thought accomplished swimmers never venture into it on that account," added Müller. "You would scarcely suppose," he continued, turning to me, "that there are men here—regular *habitués* of the bath—who never go into the water, and yet give themselves all the airs of practised bathers. That tall man, for instance, with the black beard and striped *peignoir*, yonder—there's a fellow who comes once or twice a week all through the season, goes through the ceremony of undressing, smokes, gossips, criticises, is looked up to as an authority, and has never yet been seen off the platform. Then there's that bald man in the white robe—his name's Giroflet—a retired stockbroker. Well, that fellow robes himself like an ancient Roman, puts himself in classical attitudes, affects taciturnity, models himself upon Brutus and all that sort of thing; but is as careful not to get his feet wet as a cat.

Others, again, come simply to feed. The restaurant is one of the choicest in Paris, with this advantage over Véfour or the Trois Frères, that it is the only place where you may eat and drink of the best in hot weather, with nothing on but the briefest of *caleçons*."

Thus chattering, Müller took me the tour of the bath, which now began to fill rapidly. We then took possession of two little dressing-rooms no bigger than sentry-boxes, and were presently in the water.

The scene now became very animated. Hundreds of eccentric figures crowded the galleries—some absurdly fat, some ludicrously thin; some old, some young; some bow-legged, some knock-kneed; some short, some tall; some brown, some yellow; some got up for effect in gorgeous wrappers; and all more or less hideous.

"An amusing sight, isn't it?" said Müller, as, having swum several times round the bath, we sat down for a few moments on one of the flights of steps leading down to the water.

"It is a sight to disgust one for ever with human-kind," I replied.

"And to fill one with the profoundest respect for one's tailor. After all, it's broad-cloth makes the man."

"But these are not men—they are caricatures."

"Every man is a caricature of himself when you strip him," said Müller, epigrammatically. "Look at that scarecrow just opposite. He passes for an Adonis, *de par le monde.*"

I looked, and recognised the Count de Rivarol, a tall young man, an *élégant* of the first water, a curled darling of society, a professed lady-killer, whom I had met many a time in attendance on Madame de Marignan. He now looked like a monkey:—

> . . . . "long, and lank and brown,
> As in the ribb'd sea sand!"

"Gracious heavens!" I exclaimed, "what would become of the world, if clothes went out of fashion?"

"Humph!—one half of us, my dear fellow, would commit suicide."

At the upper end of the bath was a semi-circular platform somewhat loftier than the rest, called the Amphitheatre. This, I learned, was the place of honour. Here clustered the *élite* of the swimmers; here they discussed the great principles of their art, and passed judgment on the performances of those less skilful than themselves. To the right of the Amphitheatre rose a slender spiral staircase, like an openwork pillar of iron, with a tiny circular platform on the top, half surrounded by a light iron rail. This conspicuous perch, like the pillar of St. Simeon Stylites, was every now and then surmounted by the gaunt figure of some ambitious plunger who, after attitudinising awhile in the pose of Napoleon on the column Vendôme, would join his hands above his head and take a tremendous "header" into the gulf below. When this feat was successfully performed, the *élite* in the Amphitheatre applauded graciously.

And now, what with swimming, and lounging, and looking on, some two hours had slipped by, and we were both hungry

and tired. Müller proposed that we should breakfast at the Café Procope.

"But why not here?" I asked, as a delicious breeze from the buffet came wafting by "like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes."

"BECAUSE a breakfast *chez* Molino costs at least twenty-five francs per head—BECAUSE I have credit at Procope—BECAUSE I have not a *sou* in my pocket—and BECAUSE, milord Smithfield, I aspire to the honour of entertaining your lordship on the present occasion!" replied Müller, punctuating each clause of his sentence with a bow.

If Müller had not a *sou*, I, at all events, had now only one Napoleon; so the Café Procope carried the day.

## CHAPTER X.

### *The Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie and the Café Procope.*

THE Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain des Près and the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie are one and the same. As the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain des Près, it dates back to somewhere about the reign of Philippe Auguste; and as the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie it takes its name and fame from the year 1689, when the old Theatre Français was opened on the 18th of April by the company known as Molière's troupe—Molière being then dead, and Lully having succeeded him at the Theatre du Palais Royal.

In the same year, 1689, one François Procope, a Sicilian, conceived the happy idea of hiring a house just opposite the new

theatre, and there opening a public refreshment-room, which at once became famous, not only for the excellence of its coffee (then newly introduced into France), but also for being the favourite resort of all the wits, dramatists, and beaux of that brilliant time. Here the latest epigrams were circulated, the newest scandals discussed, the bitterest literary cabals set on foot. Here Jean Jacques brooded over his chocolate; and Voltaire drank his mixed with coffee; and Dorat wrote his love-letters to Mademoiselle Saunier; and Marmontel wrote praises of Mademoiselle Clairon; and the Marquis de Biévre made puns innumerable; and Duclos and Mercier wrote satires, now almost forgotten; and Piron recited those verses which are at once his shame and his fame; and the Chevalier de St. Georges gave fencing lessons to his literary friends; and Lamothe, Fréron, D'Alembert, Diderot, Helvetius, and all that wonderful company of wits, philosophers, encyclopædists, and poets, that lit up as with a dying glory the last decades of the old *régime*, met daily,

nightly, to write, to recite, to squabble, to lampoon, and sometimes to fight.

The year 1770 beheld, in the closing of the Theatre Français, the extinction of a great power in the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain-des-Près—for it was not, in fact, till the theatre was no more a theatre that the street changed its name, and became the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie. A new house (to be on first opening invested with the time-honoured title of Theatre Français, but afterwards to be known as the Odéon) was now in progress of erection in the close neighbourhood of the Luxembourg. The actors, meanwhile, repaired to the little theatre of the Tuileries. At length, in 1782,* the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie was one evening awakened from its two years' lethargy by the echo of many footfalls, the glare of many flambeaux, and the rattle of many wheels; for all Paris, all the wits and critics of the Café Procope, all the fair

* 1782 is the date given by M. Hippolyte Lucas. Sainte-Beuve places it two years later.

shepherdesses and all the beaux seignieurs of the court of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI., were hastening on foot, in chairs, and in chariots, to the opening of the new house and the performance of a new play! And what a play! Surely, not to consider it too curiously, a play which struck, however sportively, the key-note of the coming Revolution;—a play which, for the first time, displayed society literally in a state of *bouleversement*;—a play in which the greed of the courtier, the venality of the judge, the empty glitter of the crown, were openly held up to scorn;—a play in which all the wit, audacity, and success are on the side of the *canaille*;—a play in which a lady's-maid is the heroine, and a valet canes his master, and a great nobleman is tricked, outwitted, and covered with ridicule!

This play, produced for the first time under the title of *La Folle Journée*, was written by one Caron de Beaumarchais—a man of wit, a man of letters, a man of the people, a man of nothing—and was destined

to achieve immortality under its later title of *Le Mariage de Figaro.*

A few years later, and the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie echoed daily and nightly to the dull rumble of Revolutionary tumbrils, and the heavy tramp of Revolutionary mobs. Danton and Camille Desmoulins must have passed through it habitually on their way to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Charlotte Corday (and this is a matter of history) did pass through it that bright July evening, 1793, on her way to a certain gloomy house still to be seen in the adjoining Rue de l'École de Medicine, where she stabbed Marat in his bath.

But throughout every vicissitude of time and politics, though fashion deserted the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie, and actors migrated, and fresh generations of wits and philosophers succeeded each other, the Café Procope still held its ground and maintained its ancient reputation. The theatre (closed in less than a century) became the studio first of Gros and then of Gérard, and was finally occupied by a succession of restaura-

teurs; but the Café Procope remained the Café Procope, and is the Café Procope to this day.

The old street and all belonging to it—especially and peculiarly the Café Procope—was of the choicest Quartier Latin flavour in the time of which I write; in the pleasant, careless, impecunious days of my youth. A cheap and highly popular restaurateur named Pinson rented the old theatre. A *costumier* hung out wigs, and masks, and debardeur garments next door to the restaurateur. Where the fatal tumbril used to labour past, the frequent omnibus now rattled gaily by; and the pavements trodden of old by Voltaire, and Beaumarchais, and Charlotte Corday, were thronged by a merry tide of students and grisettes.

Meanwhile the Café Procope, though no longer the resort of great wits and famous philosophers, received within its hospitable doors, and nourished with its indifferent refreshments, many a now celebrated author, painter, barrister, and statesman. It was the general rendezvous for students of all

kinds—poets of the École-de-Droit, philosophers of the École-de-Medicine, critics of the École-des-Beaux Arts. It must however be admitted that the poetry and criticism of these future great men was somewhat too liberally perfumed with tobacco, and that into their systems of philosophy there entered a considerable element of grisette.

Such, at the time of my first introduction to it, was the famous Café Procope.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *The Philosophy of Breakfast.*

"NOW this, *mon cher*," said Müller, taking off his hat with a flourish to the young lady at the *comptoir*, "is the immortal Café Procope."

I looked round, and found myself in a dingy, ordinary sort of Café, in no wise differing from any other dingy, ordinary sort of Café in that part of Paris. The decorations were ugly enough to be modern. The ceiling was as black with gas fumes and tobacco-smoke as any other ceiling in any other estaminet in the Quartier Latin. The waiters looked as waiters always look before midday—sleepy, discontented, and unwashed. A few young men of the regular student type were scattered about here and there at

various tables, reading, smoking, chatting, breakfasting, and reading the morning papers. In an alcove at the upper end of the second room (for there were two, one opening from the other) stood a blackened, broken-nosed, plaster bust of Voltaire, upon the summit of whose august wig some irreverent customer had perched a particularly rakish-looking hat. Just in front of this alcove and below the bust stood a marble-topped table, at one end of which two young men were playing dominoes to the accompaniment of the matutinal absinthe.

"And this," said Müller, with another flourish, "is the still more immortal table of the still more supremely immortal Voltaire. Here he was wont to rest his sublime elbows and sip his *demitasse*. Here, upon this very table, he wrote that famous letter to Marie Antoinette that Fréron stole, and in revenge for which he wrote the comedy called *L'Ecossaise;* but of this admirable satire you English, who only know Voltaire in his Henriade and his history of Charles the Twelfth, have probably never heard till

this moment! *Eh bien!* I'm not much wiser than you—so never mind. I'll be hanged if I've ever read a line of it. Anyhow, here is the table, and at this other end of it we'll have our breakfast."

It was a large, old-fashioned, Louis Quatorze piece of furniture, the top of which, formed from a single slab of some kind of grey and yellow marble, was stained all over with the coffee, wine, and ink splashes of many generations of customers. It looked as old—nay, older—than the house itself.

The young men who were playing at dominoes looked up and nodded, as three or four others had done in the outer room when we passed through.

"*Bonjour, l'ami,*" said the one who seemed to be winning. "Hast thou chanced to see anything of Martial, coming along?"

"I observed a nose defiling round the corner of the Rue de Bussy," replied Müller, "and it looked as if Martial might be somewhere in the far distance, but I didn't wait to see. Are you expecting him?"

"Confound him—yes! We've been waiting more than half an hour."

"If you have invited him to breakfast," said Müller, "he is sure to come."

"On the contrary, he has invited us to breakfast."

"Ah, that alters the case," said Müller, philosophically. "Then he is sure *not* to come. Garçon!"

A bullet-headed, short-jacketted, long-aproned waiter, who looked as if he had not been to bed since his early youth, answered the summons.

"M'sieur!"

"What have you that you can especially recommend this morning?"

The waiter, with that nasal volubility peculiar to his race, rapidly ran over the whole vegetable and animal creation.

Müller listened with polite incredulity.

"Nothing else?" said he, when the other stopped, apparently from want of breath.

"*Mais oui, M'sieur!*" and, thus stimulated, the waiter, having "exhausted worlds and then imagined new," launched forth into a

second and still more impossible catalogue.

Müller turned to me.

"The resources of this establishment, you observe," he said very gravely, "are inexhaustible. One might have a Roc's egg à la Sindbad for the asking."

The waiter looked puzzled, shuffled his slippered feet, and murmured something about "*œufs sur le plat.*"

"Unfortunately, however," continued Müller, "we are but men—not fortresses provisioning for a siege. Antoine, *mon enfant*, we know thee to be a fellow of incontestible veracity, and thy list is magnificent; but we will be content with a *vol-au-vent* of fish, a *bifteck aux pommes frites*, an *omelette sucrée*, and a bottle of thy 1840 Bordeaux with the yellow seal. Now vanish!"

The waiter, wearing an expression of intense relief, vanished accordingly.

Meanwhile more students had come in, and more kept coming. Hats and caps cropped up rapidly wherever there were pegs to hang them on, and the talking became fast and furious.

I soon found that everybody knew everybody at the Café Procope, and that the speciality of the establishment was dominoes —just as the speciality of the Café de la Régence is chess. There were games going on before long at almost every table, and groups of lookers-on gathered about those who enjoyed the reputation of being skilful players.

Gradually breakfast after breakfast emerged from some mysterious nether world known only to the waiters, and the war of dominoes languished.

"These are all students, of course," I said presently, "and yet, though I meet a couple of hundred fellows at our hospital lectures, I don't see a face I know."

"You would find some by this time, I dare say, in the other room," replied Müller. "I brought you in here that you might sit at Voltaire's table, and eat your steak under the shadow of Voltaire's bust; but this salon is chiefly frequented by law-students—the other by medical and art students. Your place, *mon cher*, as

well as mine, is in the outer sanctuary."

"That infernal Martial!" groaned one of the domino players at the other end of the table. "So ends the seventh game, and here we are still. *Parbleu!* Horace, hasn't that absinthe given you an inconvenient amount of appetite?"

"Alas! my friend—don't mention it. And when the absinthe is paid for, I haven't a sou."

"My own case precisely. What's to be done?"

"Done!" echoed Horace pathetically. "Shade of Apicius! inspire me . . . but, no—he's not listening."

"Hold! I have it. We'll make our wills in one another's favour, and die."

"I should prefer to die when the wind is due East, and the moon at the full," said Horace, contemplatively.

"True—besides, there is still *la mère* Gaudissart. Her cutlets are tough, but her heart is tender. She would not surely refuse to add one more breakfast to the score!"

Horace shook his head with an air of great despondency.

"There was but one Job," said he, "and he has been dead some time. The patience of *la mère* Gaudissart has long since been entirely exhausted."

"I am not so sure of that. One might appeal to her feelings, you know—have a presentiment of early death—wipe away a tear . . . Bah! it is worth the effort, anyhow."

"It is a forlorn hope, my dear fellow, but, as you say, it is worth the effort. *Allons donc!* to the storming of *la mère* Gaudissart!"

And with this they pushed aside the dominoes, took down their hats, nodded to Müller, and went out.

"There go two of the brightest fellows and most improvident scamps in the whole Quartier," said my companion. "They are both studying for the bar; both under age; both younger sons of good families; and both destined, if I am not much mistaken, to rise to eminence by-and-by. Horace

writes for *Figaro* and the *Petit Journal pour Rire*—Théophile does *feuilleton* work—romances, chit-chat, and political squibs—rubbish, of course; but clever rubbish, and wonderful when one considers what boys they both are, and what dissipated lives they lead. The amount of impecuniosity those fellows get through in the course of a term is something inconceivable. They have often only one decent suit between them—and sometimes not that. To-day, you see, they are at their wits' end for a breakfast. They have run their credit dry at Procope and everywhere else, and are gone now to a miserable little den in the Rue du Paon, kept by a fat good-natured old soul called *la mère* Gaudissart. She will perhaps take compassion on their youth and inexperience, and let them have six sous worth of horsebeef soup, stale bread, and the day before yesterday's vegetables. Nay, don't look so pitiful! We poor devils of the Student Quartier hug our Bohemian life, and exalt it above every other. When we have money, we

cannot find windows enough out of which to fling it—when we have none, we start upon *la chasse au diner*, and enjoy the pleasures of the chase. We revel in the extremes of fasting and feasting, and scarcely know which we prefer."

"I think your friends Horace and Théophile are tolerably clear as to which *they* prefer," I remarked, with a smile.

"Bah! they would die of *ennui* if they had always enough to eat! Think how it sharpens a man's wits if—given the time, the place, and the appetite—he has every day to find the credit for his dinners! Show me a mathematical problem to compare with it as a popular educator of youth!"

"But for young men of genius, like Horace and Théophile" . . . .

"Make yourself quite easy, *mon cher*. A little privation will do them no kind of harm. They belong to that class of whom it has been said that 'they would borrow money from Harpagon, and find truffles on the raft of the Medusa." But hold! we are at the end of our breakfast. What say you?

Shall we take our *demi-tasse* in the next room, among our fellow-students of physic and the fine arts?"

## CHAPTER XII.

### *A Man with a History.*

THE society of the outer salon differed essentially from the society of the inner salon at the Café Procope. It was noisier—it was shabbier—it was smokier. The conversation in the inner salon was of a general character on the whole, and, as one caught sentences of it here and there, seemed for the most part to relate to the literature and news of the day—to the last important paper in the Revue des Deux Mondes, to the new drama at the Odéon, or to the article on foreign politics in the *Journal des Débats*. But in the outer salon the talk was to the last degree shoppy, and overflowed with the argôt of the studios. Some few medical students were clustered, it is true, in a corner near

the door; but they were so outnumbered by the artists at the upper end of the room, that these latter seemed to hold complete possession, and behaved more like the members of a recognised club than the casual customers of a café. They talked from table to table. They called the waiters by their Christian names. They swaggered up and down the middle of the room with their hats on their heads, their hands in their pockets, and their pipes in their mouths, as coolly as if it were the broad walk of the Luxembourg gardens.

And the appearance of these gentlemen was not less remarkable than their deportment. Their hair, their beards, their clothes, were of the wildest devising. They seemed one and all to have started from a central idea, that central idea being to look as unlike their fellow-men as possible; and thence to have diverged into a variety that was nothing short of infinite. Each man had evidently modelled himself upon his own ideal, and no two ideals were alike. Some were picturesque, some were grotesque; and

some, it must be admitted, were rather dirty ideals, into the realization of which no such paltry considerations as those of soap, water, or brushes were permitted to enter.

Here, for instance, were Roundhead crops and flowing locks of Cavalier redundancy—steeple-crowned hats, and Roman cloaks draped bandit-fashion—moustachios frizzed and brushed up the wrong way in the style of Louis XIV.—pointed beards and slouched hats, after the manner of Vandyke—patriarchal beards *à la Barbarossa*—open collars, smooth chins, and long undulating locks of the Raffaelle type—coats, blouses, paletots of inconceivable cut, and all kinds of unusual colours—in a word, every eccentricity of clothing, short of fancy costume, in which it was practicable for men of the nineteenth century to walk abroad and meet the light of day.

We had no sooner entered this salon, taken possession of a vacant table, and called for coffee, than my companion was beset by a storm of greetings.

"Holà! Müller, where hast thou been

hiding these last few centuries, *mon gaillard*?"

"*Tiens!* Müller risen from the dead!"

"What news from *là bas*, old fellow?"

To all which ingenious pleasantries my companion replied in kind—introducing me at the same time to two or three of the nearest speakers. One of these, a dark young man got up in the style of a Byzantine Christ, with straight hair parted down the middle, a bifurcated beard, and a bare throat, was called Eugène Droz. Another—big, burly, warm-complexioned, with bright open blue eyes, curling reddish beard and moustache, slouched hat, black velvet blouse, immaculate linen, and an abundance of rings, chains, and ornaments—was made up in excellent imitation of the well-known portrait of Rubens. This gentleman's name, as I presently learned, was Cæsar de Lepany.

When we came in, these two young men, Droz and De Lepany, were discussing, in enthusiastic but somewhat unintelligible language, the merits of a certain Monsieur Lemonnier, of whom, although till that mo-

ment ignorant of his name and fame, I at once perceived that he must be some celebrated *chef de cuisine.*

"He will never surpass that last thing of his," said the Byzantine youth. "Heavens! How smooth it is! How buttery! How pulpy!"

"Ay—and yet with all that lusciousness of quality, he never wants piquancy," added De Lepany.

"I think his greens are apt to be a little raw," interposed Müller, taking part in the conversation.

"Raw!" echoed the first speaker, indignantly. "*Eh, mon Dieu!* What can you be thinking of? They are almost too hot!"

"But they were not so always, Eugène," said he of the Rubens make-up, with an air of reluctant candour. "It must be admitted that Lemonnier's greens used formerly to be a trifle—just a trifle—raw. Evidently Monsieur Müller does not know how much he has taken to warming them up of late. Even now, perhaps, his olives are a little cold."

"But then, how juicy his oranges are!" exclaimed young Byzantine.

"True—and when you remember that he never washes——!"

"Ah, *sacredie!* yes—there is the marvel!"

And Monsieur Eugène Droz held up his hands and eyes with all the reverent admiration of a true believer for a particularly dirty dervish.

"Who, in heaven's name, is this unclean individual who used to like his vegetables underdone, and never washes?" whispered I in Müller's ear.

"What—Lemonnier? You don't mean to say you never heard of Lemonnier?"

"Never, till now. Is he a cook?"

Müller gave me a dig in the ribs that took my breath away.

"*Goguenard!*" said he. "Lemonnier's an artist—the foremost man of the water-colour school. But I wouldn't be too funny if I were you. Suppose you were to burst your jocular vein—there'd be a catastrophe!"

Meanwhile the conversation of Messieurs Droz and Lepany had taken a fresh turn, and attracted a little circle of listeners, among whom I observed an eccentric-looking young man with a club-foot, an enormously long neck, and a head of short, stiff, dusty hair, like the bristles of a blacking-brush.

"Queroulet!" said Lepany, with a contemptuous flourish of his pipe. "Who spoke of Queroulet? Bah!—a miserable plodder, destitute of ideality—a fellow who paints only what he sees, and sees only what is commonplace—a dull, narrow-souled, unimaginative handicraftsman, to whom a tree is just a tree; and a man, a man; and a straw, a straw, and nothing more!"

"That's a very low-souled view to take of art, no doubt," croaked in a grating treble voice the youth with the club-foot; "but if trees and men and straws are not exactly trees and men and straws, and are not to be represented as trees and men and straws, may I inquire what else they are, and how they are to be pictorially treated?"

"They must be ideally treated, Monsieur Valentin," replied Lepany, majestically.

"No doubt; but what will they be like when they are ideally treated? Will they still, to the vulgar eye, be recognisable for trees and men and straws?"

"I should scarcely have supposed that Monsieur Valentin would jest upon such a subject as a canon of the art he professes," said Lepany, becoming more and more dignified.

"I am not jesting," croaked Monsieur Valentin; "but when I hear men of your school talk so much about the Ideal, I (as a realist) always want to know what they themselves understand by the phrase."

"Are you asking me for my definition of the Ideal, Monsieur Valentin?"

"Well, if it's not giving you too much trouble—yes."

Lepany, who evidently relished every chance of showing off, fell into a picturesque attitude and prepared to hold forth. Valentin winked at one or two of his own clique, and lit a cigar.

"You ask me," began Lepany, "to define the Ideal—in other words, to define the indefinite, which alas! whether from a metaphysical, a philosophical, or an æsthetic point of view, is a task transcending immeasurably my circumscribed powers of expression."

"Gracious heavens!" whispered Müller in my ear. "He must have been reared from infancy on words of five syllables!"

"What shall I say?" pursued Lepany. "Shall I say that the Ideal is, as it were, the Real distilled and sublimated in the alembic of the imagination? Shall I say that the Ideal is an image projected by the soul of genius upon the background of the universe? That it is that dazzling, that unimaginable, that incommunicable goal towards which the suns in their orbits, the stars in their courses, the spheres with all their harmonies, have been chaotically tending since time began? Ideal, say you? Call it ideal, soul, mind, matter, art, eternity .... what are they all but words? What are words but the weak strivings of the fettered

soul that fain would soar to those empyrean heights where Truth, and Art, and Beauty are one and indivisible? Shall I say all this . . . ."

"My dear fellow, you have said it already—you needn't say it again," interrupted Valentin.

"Ay; but having said it—having expressed myself, perchance with some obscurity . . ."

"With the obscurity of Erebus!" said, very deliberately, a fat student in a blouse.

"Monsieur!" exclaimed De Lepany, measuring the length and breadth of the fat student with a glance of withering scorn.

The Byzantine was no less indignant.

"Don't heed them, *mon ami!*" he cried, enthusiastically. "Thy definition is sublime—eloquent!"

"Nay," said Valentin, "we concede that Monsieur de Lepany is sublime; we recognise with admiration that he is eloquent; but we submit that he is wholly unintelligible."

And having delivered this parting shot, the club-footed realist slipped his arm through

the arm of the fat student, and went off to a distant table and a game at dominoes.

Then followed an outburst of offended idealism. His own clique crowded round Lepany as the champion of their school. They shook hands with him. They embraced him. They fooled him to the top of his bent. Presently, being not only as good-natured as he was conceited, but (rare phenomenon in the Quartier Latin!) a rich fellow into the bargain, De Lepany called for champagne and treated his admirers all round.

In the midst of the chatter and bustle which this incident occasioned, a pale, earnest-looking man of about five and thirty, coming past our table on his way out of the Café, touched Müller on the arm, bent down, and said quietly:—

"Müller, will you do me a favour?"

"A hundred, Monsieur," replied my companion; half rising, and with an air of unusual respect and alacrity.

"Thanks, one will be enough. Do you see that man yonder, sitting alone in

the corner, with his back to the light?"

"I do."

"Good—don't look at him again, for fear of attracting his attention. I have been trying for the last half hour to get a sketch of his head, but I think he suspected me. Anyhow he moved so often, and so hid his face with his hands and the newspaper, that I was completely baffled. Now it is a remarkable head—just the head I have been wanting for my Marshal Romero—and if, with your rapid pencil and your skill in seizing expression, you could manage this for me . . . ."

"I will do my best," said Müller.

"A thousand thanks. I will go now; for when I am gone he will be off his guard. You will find me in the den up to three o'clock. Adieu."

Saying which, the stranger passed on, and went out.

"That's Flandrin!" said Müller.

"Really?" I said. "Flandrin! And you know him?"

But in truth I only answered thus to

cover my own ignorance; for I knew little at that time of modern French art, and I had never even heard the name of Flandrin before.

"Know him!" echoed Müller. "I should think so. Why, I worked in his studio for nearly two years."

And then he explained to me that this great painter (great even then, though as yet appreciated only in certain choice Parisian circles, and not known out of France) was at work upon a grand historical subject connected with the Spanish persecutions in the Netherlands—the execution of Egmont and Horn, in short, in the great square before the Hotel de Ville in Brussels.

"But the main point now," said Müller, "is to get the sketch—and how? Confound the fellow! while he keeps his back to the light and his head down like that, the thing is impossible. Anyhow I can't do it without an accomplice. You must help me."

"I! What can I do?"

"Go and sit near him—speak to him—make him look up—keep him, if possible,

for a few minutes in conversation—nothing easier."

"Nothing easier, perhaps, if I were you; but, being only myself, few things more difficult!"

"Nevertheless, my dear boy, you must try, and at once. Hey—presto!—away!"

Placed where we were, the stranger was not likely to have observed us; for we had come into the room from behind the corner in which he was sitting, and had taken our places at a table which he could not have seen without shifting his own position. So, thus peremptorily commanded, I rose; slipped quietly back into the inner salon, made a pretext of looking at the clock over the door; and came out again, as if alone and looking for a vacant seat.

The table at which he had placed himself was very small—only just big enough to stand in a corner and hold a plate and a coffee-cup; but it was supposed to be large enough for two, and there were evidently two chairs belonging to it. On one of these, being alone, the stranger had placed his

overcoat and a small black bag. I at once saw and seized my opportunity.

"Pardon, Monsieur," I said, very civilly, "will you permit me to hang these things up?"

He looked up, frowned, and said abruptly:—

"Why, Monsieur?"

"That I may occupy this chair."

He glanced round; saw that there was really no other vacant; swept off the bag and coat with his own hands; hung them on a peg overhead; dropped back into his former attitude, and went on reading.

"I regret to have given you the trouble, Monsieur," I said, hoping to pave the way to a conversation.

But a little quick, impatient movement of the hand was his only reply. He did not even raise his head. He did not even lift his eyes from the paper.

I called for a demi-tasse and a cigar; then took out a note-book and pencil, assumed an air of profound abstraction, and affected to become absorbed in calculations.

In the meanwhile, I could not resist furtively observing the appearance of this man whom a great artist had selected as his model for one of the darkest characters of mediæval history.

He was rather below than above the middle height; spare and sinewy; square in the shoulders and deep in the chest; with close-clipped hair and beard; grizzled moustache; high cheek-bones; stern impassive features, sharply cut; and deep-set restless eyes, quick and glancing as the eyes of a monkey. His face, throat, and hands were sunburnt to a deep copper colour, as if cast in bronze. His age might have been from forty-five to fifty. He wore a threadbare frock coat buttoned to the chin; a stiff black stock revealing no glimpse of shirt-collar; a well-worn hat pulled low over his eyes; and trousers of dark blue cloth, worn very white and shiny at the knees, and strapped tightly down over a pair of much-mended boots.

The more I looked at him, the less I was surprised that Flandrin should have been

struck by his appearance. There was an air of stern poverty and iron resolution about the man that arrested one's attention at first sight. The words "*ancien militaire*" were written in every furrow of his face; in every seam and on every button of his shabby clothing. That he had seen service, missed promotion, suffered unmerited neglect (or, it might be, merited disgrace), seemed also not unlikely.

Watching him as he sat, half turned away, half hidden by the newspaper he was reading, one elbow resting on the table, one brown, sinewy hand supporting his chin and partly concealing his mouth, I told myself that here, at all events, was a man with a history—perhaps with a very dark history. What were the secrets of his past? What had he done? What had he endured? I would give much to know.

My coffee and cigar being brought, I asked for the *Figaro*, and, holding the paper somewhat between the stranger and myself, watched him with increasing interest.

I now began to suspect that he was less interested in his own newspaper than he appeared to be, and that his profound abstraction, like my own, was assumed. An indefinable something in the turn of his head seemed to tell me that his attention was divided between whatever might be going forward in the room and what he was reading. I cannot describe what that something was; but it gave me the impression that he was always listening. When the outer door opened or shut, he stirred uneasily, and once or twice looked sharply round to see what new-comer entered the café. Was he anxiously expecting someone who did not come? Or was he dreading the appearance of someone whom he wished to avoid? Might he not be a political refugee? Might he not be a spy!

"There is nothing of interest in the papers to-day, Monsieur," I said, making another effort to force him into conversation.

He affected not to hear me.

I drew my chair a little nearer, and repeated the observation.

He frowned impatiently, and without looking up, replied:—

"*Eh, mon Dieu,* Monsieur!—when there is a dearth of news!"

"There need not, even so, be a dearth of wit. *Figaro* is as heavy to-day as a government leader in the *Moniteur.*"

He shrugged his shoulders and moved slightly round, apparently to get a better light upon what he was reading, but in reality to turn still more away from me. The gesture of avoidance was so marked, that with the best will in the world, it would have been impossible for me to address him again. I therefore relapsed into silence.

Presently I saw a sudden change flash over him.

Now, in turning away from myself, he had faced round towards a narrow looking-glass panel which reflected part of the opposite side of the room; and chancing, I suppose, to lift his eyes from the paper, he had seen something that arrested his attention. His head was still bent; but I could see that

his eyes were riveted upon the mirror. There was alertness in the tightening of his hand before his mouth—in the suspension of his breathing.

Then he rose abruptly, brushed past me as if I were not there, and crossed to where Müller, sketch-book in hand, was in the very act of taking his portrait.

I jumped up, almost involuntarily, and followed him. Müller, with an unsuccessful effort to conceal his confusion, thrust the book into his pocket.

"Monsieur," said the stranger, in a low, resolute voice, "I protest against what you have been doing. You have no right to take my likeness without my permission."

"Pardon, Monsieur, I—I beg to assure you——" stammered Müller.

"That you intended no offence? I am willing to suppose so. Give me up the sketch, and I am content."

"Give up the sketch!" echoed Muller.

"Precisely, Monsieur."

"Nay—but if, as an artist, I have observed that which leads me to desire a—a

memorandum—let us say of the pose and contour of a certain head," replied Müller, recovering his self-possession, "it is not likely that I shall be disposed to part from my memorandum."

"How, Monsieur! you refuse?"

"I am infinitely sorry, but——"

"But you refuse?

"I cannot certainly comply with Monsieur's request."

The stranger, for all his bronzing, grew pale with rage.

"Do not compel me, Monsieur, to say what I must think of your conduct, if you persist in this determination," he said fiercely.

Müller smiled, but made no reply.

"You absolutely refuse to yield up the sketch?"

"Absolutely."

"Then, Monsieur, *c'est une infamie—et vous êtes un lache!*"

But the last word had scarcely hissed past his lips before Müller dashed his coffee dregs full in the stranger's face.

In one second, the table was upset—blows were exchanged—Müller, pinned against the wall with his adversary's hands upon his throat, was striking out with the desperation of a man whose strength is overmatched—and the whole room was in a tumult.

In vain I attempted to fling myself between them. In vain the waiters rushed to and fro, imploring "ces Messieurs" to interpose. In vain a stout man pushed his way through the bystanders, exclaiming angrily:—

"Desist, Messieurs! Desist, in the name of the law! I am the proprietor of this establishment—I forbid this brawling—I will have you both arrested! Messieurs, do you hear?"

Suddenly the flush of rage faded out of Müller's face. He gasped—he became livid. Lepany, Droz, myself, and one or two others, flew at the stranger and dragged him forcibly back.

"Assassin!" I cried, "would you murder him?"

He flung us off, as a baited bull flings off a pack of curs. For myself, though I received only a back-handed blow on the chest, I staggered as if I had been struck with a sledgehammer.

Müller, half-fainting, dropped into a chair.

There was a tramp and clatter at the door—a swaying and parting of the crowd.

"Here are the sergens de ville!" cried a trembling waiter.

"He attacked me first," gasped Müller. "He has half strangled me."

"*Qu'est ce que ça me fait?*" shouted the enraged proprietor. "You are a couple of *canaille!* You have made a scandal in my Café. Sergens, arrest both these gentlemen!"

The police—there were two of them, with their big cocked hats on their heads and their long sabres by their sides—pushed through the circle of spectators. The first laid his hand on Müller's shoulder; the second was about to lay his hand on mine, but I drew back.

"Which is the other?" said he, looking round.

"*Sacredie!*" stammered the proprietor, "he was here—there—not a moment ago!"

"*Diable!*" said the sergen de ville, stroking his moustache, and staring fiercely about him. "Did no one see him go?"

There was a chorus of exclamations—a rush to the inner salon—to the door—to the street. But the stranger was nowhere in sight; and, which was still more incomprehensible, no one had seen him go!

"*Mais, mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the proprietor, mopping his head and face violently with his pocket-handkerchief, "was the man a ghost, that he should vanish into the air?"

"*Parbleu!* a ghost with muscles of iron," said Müller. "Talk of the strength of a madman—he has the strength of a whole lunatic asylum!"

"He gave me a most confounded blow in the ribs, anyhow!" said Lepany.

"And nearly broke my arm," added Eugène Droz.

"And has given me a pain in my chest for a week," said I, in chorus.

"If he wasn't a ghost," observed the fat student sententiously, "he must certainly be the devil."

The sergens de ville grinned.

"Do we, then, arrest this gentleman?" asked the taller and bigger of the two, his hand still upon my friend's shoulder.

But Müller laughed and shook his head.

"What!" said he, "arrest a man for resisting the devil? Nonsense, *mes amis*, you ought to canonise me. What says Monsieur le proprietaire?"

Monsieur the proprietor smiled.

"I am willing to let the matter drop," he replied, "on the understanding that Monsieur Müller was not really the first offender."

"*Foi d'honneur!* He insulted me—I threw some coffee in his face—he flung himself upon me like a tiger, and almost choked me, as all here witnessed. And for what?

Because I did him the honour to make a a rough pencilling of his ugly face . . . *Mille tonnerres*!—the fellow has stolen my sketch-book!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *Fancies about Faces.*

THE sketch-book was undoubtedly gone, and the stranger had undoubtedly taken it. How he took it, and how he vanished, remained a mystery.

The aspect of affairs, meanwhile, was materially changed. Müller no longer stood in the position of a leniently-treated offender. He had become accuser, and plaintiff. A grave breach of the law had been committed, and he was the victim of a bold and skilful *tour de main.*

The police shook their heads, twirled their mustaches, and looked wise.

It was a case of premeditated assault—in short, of robbery with violence. It must

be inquired into—reported, of course, at head-quarters without loss of time. Would Monsieur be pleased to describe the stolen sketch-book? An oblong, green volume, secured by an elastic band; contains sketches in pencil and water-colours; value uncertain——Good. And the accused . . . would Monsieur be pleased also to describe the person of the accused? His probable age, for instance; his height; the colour of his hair, eyes, and beard? Good again. Lastly, Monsieur's own name and address, exactly and in full. *Très bon.* It might, perhaps, be necessary for Monsieur to enter a formal deposition to-morrow morning at the Prefecture of Police, in which case due notice would be given.

Whereupon he who seemed to be chief of the twain, having entered Müller's replies in a greasy pocket-book of stupendous dimensions, which he seemed to wear like a cuirass under the breast of his uniform, proceeded to interrogate the proprietor and waiters.

Was the accused an habitual frequenter

of the café?—No. Did they remember ever to have seen him there before?—No. Should they recognise him if they saw him again? To this question the answers were doubtful. One waiter thought he should recognise the man; another was not sure; and Monsieur the proprietor admitted that he had himself been too angry to observe anything or anybody very minutely.

Finally, having made themselves of as much importance and asked as many questions as possible, the sergens de ville condescended to accept a couple of petits verres a-piece, and then, with much lifting of cocked hats and clattering of sabres, departed.

Most of the students had ere this dropped off by twos and threes, and were gone to their day's work, or pleasure—to return again in equal force about five in the afternoon. Of those that remained, some five or six came up when the police were gone, and began chatting about the robbery. When they learned that Flandrin had desired to have a sketch of the man's head; when

Müller described his features, and I his obstinate reserve and semi-military air, their excitement knew no bounds. Each had immediately his own conjecture to offer. He was a political spy, and therefore fearful lest his portrait should be recognised. He was a conspirator of the Fieschi school. He was Mazzini in person!

In the midst of the discussion, a sudden recollection flashed upon me.

"A clue! a clue!" I shouted triumphantly. "He left his coat and black bag hanging up in the corner!"

Followed by the others, I ran to the spot where I had been sitting before the affray began. But my exultation was short-lived. Coat and bag, like their owner, had disappeared.

Müller thrust his hands into his pockets, shook his head, and whistled dismally.

"I shall never see my sketch-book again, *parbleu!*" said he. "The man who could not only take it out of my breast-pocket, but also, in the very teeth of the police, secure his property and escape unseen, is a

master of his profession. Our friends in the cocked hats have no chance against him."

"And Flandrin who is expecting the sketch," said I; "what of him?"

Müller shrugged his shoulders.

"Next to being beaten," growled he, "there's nothing I hate like confessing it. However, it has to be done—so the sooner the better. Would you like to come with me? You'll see his studio."

I was only too glad to accompany him; for to me, as to most of us, there was ever a nameless charm in the picturesque litter of an artist's studio. Müller's own studio, however, was as yet the only one I had seen. He laughed when I said this.

"If your only notion of a studio is derived from that specimen," said he, "you will be agreeably surprised by the contrast. He calls his place a 'den;' but that's a metaphor. Mine is a howling wilderness."

Arriving presently at a large house at the bottom of a courtyard in the Rue Vaugirard, he knocked at a small side-door bearing a tiny brass plate not much larger than

a visiting-card, on which was engraved—"Monsieur Flandrin."

The door opened by some invisible means from within, and we entered a passage dimly lighted by a painted glass door at the farther end. My companion led the way down this passage, through the door, and into a small garden containing some three or four old trees, a rustic seat, a sun-dial on an antique-looking fragment of broken column, and a little weed-grown pond about the size of an ordinary drawing-room table, surrounded by artificial rock-work.

At the farther extremity of this garden, filling the whole space from wall to wall and occupying as much ground as must have been equal to half the original enclosure, stood a large, new, windowless building, in shape exactly like a barn, lighted from a huge skylight in the roof, and entered by a small door in one corner. I did not need to be told that this was the studio.

But if the outside was like a barn, the inside was like a beautiful mediæval interior by Cattermole—an interior abounding in

rich and costly detail; in heavy crimson draperies, precious old Italian cabinets, damascened armour, carved chairs with upright backs and twisted legs, old paintings in massive Florentine frames, and strange quaint pieces of Elizabethan furniture, like buffets, with open shelves full of rare and artistic things—bronzes, ivory-carvings, unwieldy Majolica jars, and lovely goblets of antique Venetian glass laced with spiral ornaments of blue and crimson and that dark emerald green of which the secret is now lost for ever.

Then, besides all these things, there were great folios leaning piled against the walls, one over the other; and Persian rugs of many colours lying here and there about the floor; and down in one corner I observed a heap of little models, useful, no doubt, as accessories in pictures—gondolas, frigates, foreign-looking carts, a tiny sedan chair, and the like.

But the main interest of the scene concentrated itself in the unfinished picture, the hired model (a brawny fellow in a

close-fitting suit of black, leaning on a huge two-handed sword), and the artist in his holland blouse, with the palette and brushes in his hand.

It was a very large picture, and stood on a monster easel, somewhat towards the end of the studio. The light from above poured full upon the canvas, while beyond lay a background of shadow. Much of the subject was as yet only indicated, but enough was already there to tell the tragic story and display the power of the painter. There, high above the heads of the mounted guards and the assembled spectators, rose the scaffold, hung with black. Egmont, wearing a crimson tabard, a short black cloak embroidered with gold, and a hat ornamented with black and white plumes, stood in a haughty attitude, as if facing the square and the people. Two other figures, apparently of an ecclesiastic and a Spanish general, partly in outline, partly laid in with flat colour, were placed to the right of the principal character. The headsman stood behind, leaning upon

his sword. The slender spire of the Hotel de Ville, surmounted by its gilded archangel glittering in the morning sun, rose high against a sky of cloudless blue; while all around was seen the well-known square with its sculptured gables and decorated façades—every roof, window, and balcony crowded with spectators.

Unfinished though it was, I saw at once that I was brought face to face with what would some day be a famous work of art. The figures were grandly grouped; the heads were noble; the sky was full of air; the action of the whole scene informed with life and motion.

I stood admiring and silent, while Müller told his tale, and Flandrin paused in his work to listen.

"It is horribly unlucky," said he. "I had not been able to find a portrait of Romero and, *faute de mieux*, have been trying for days past to invent the right sort of head for him—of course, without success. You never saw such a heap of failures! But as for that man at the café, if Provi-

dence had especially created him for my purpose, he could not have answered it better."

"I believe I am as sorry as you can possibly be," said Müller.

"Then you are very sorry indeed," replied the painter; and he looked even more disappointment than he expressed.

"I'm afraid I can't do it," said Müller, after a moment's silence; "but if you'll give me a pencil and a piece of paper, and credit me with the will in default of the deed, I will try to sketch the head from memory."

"Ah! if you can only do that! Here is a drawing-block—choose what pencils you prefer—or here are crayons, if you like them better."

Müller took the pencils and block, perched himself on the corner of a table, and began. Flandrin, breathless with expectation, looked over his shoulder. Even the model (in the grim character of Egmont's executioner) laid aside his two-handed sword, and came round for a peep.

"Bravo! that's just his nose and brow," said Flandrin, as Müller's rapid hand flew over the paper. "Yes—the likeness comes with every touch . . . and the eyes, so keen and furtive . . . Nay! that eyelid should be a little more depressed at the corner . . . Yes, yes—just so. Admirable! There!—don't attempt to work it up. The least thing might mar the likeness. My dear fellow, what a service you have rendered me!"

"*Quatre-vingt mille diables!*" ejaculated the model, his eyes rivetted upon the sketch.

Müller laughed and looked up.

"*Tiens!* Guichet," said he, "is that meant for a compliment?"

"Where did you see him?" asked the model pointing down at the sketch.

"Why? Do you know him?"

"Where did you see him, I say?" repeated Guichet, impatiently.

He was a rough fellow, and garnished every other sentence with an oath; but he did not mean to be uncivil.

"At the Café Procope."

"When?"

"About an hour ago. But again I repeat —do you know him?"

"Do I know him? *Tonnerre de Dieu!*"

"Then who and what is he?"

The model stroked his beard; shook his head; declined to answer.

"Bah!" said he, gloomily, "I may have seen him, or I may be mistaken. 'Tis not my affair."

"I suspect Guichet knows something against this interesting stranger," laughed Flandrin. "Come, Guichet, out with it! We are among friends."

But Guichet again looked at the drawing, and again shook his head.

"I'm no judge of pictures, messieurs," said he. "I'm only a poor devil of a model. How can I pretend to know a man from such a *griffonage* as that?"

And, taking up his big sword again, he retreated to his former post over against the picture. We all saw that he was resolved to say no more.

Flandrin, delighted with Müller's sketch, put it, with many thanks and praises, carefully away in one of the great folios against the wall.

"You have no idea, *mon cher* Müller," he said, "of what value it is to me. I was in despair about the thing till I saw that fellow this morning in the Café; and he looked as if he had stepped out of the Middle Ages on purpose for me. It is quite a mediæval face—if you know what I mean by a mediæval face."

"I think I do," said Müller. "You mean that there was a moyen-age type, as there was a classical type, and as there is a modern type."

"Just so; and therein lies the main difficulty that we historical painters have to encounter. When we cannot find portraits of our characters, we are driven to invent faces for them—and who can invent what he never sees? Invention must be based on some kind of experience; and to study old portraits is not enough for our purpose, except we frankly make use of them as por-

traits. We cannot generalise upon them, so as to resuscitate a vanished type."

"But then has it really vanished?" said Müller. "And how can we know for certain that the mediæval type did actually differ from the type we see before us every day?"

"By simple and direct proof—by studying the epochs of portrait painting. Take Holbein's heads, for instance. Were not the people of his time grimmer, harder-visaged, altogether more unbeautiful than the people of ours? Take Petitot's and Sir Peter Lely's. Can you doubt that the characteristics of their period were entirely different? Do you suppose that either race would look as we look, if resuscitated and clothed in the fashion of to-day?"

"I am not at all sure that we should observe any difference," said Müller, doubtfully.

"And I feel sure we should observe the greatest," replied Flandrin, striding up and down the studio, and speaking with great animation. "I believe, as regards the men

and women of Holbein's time, that their faces were more lined than ours; their eyes, as a rule, smaller—their mouths wider—their eyebrows more scanty—their ears larger—their figures more ungainly. And in like manner, I believe the men and women of the seventeenth century to have been more fleshy than either Holbein's people or ourselves; to have had rounder cheeks, eyes more prominent and heavy-lidded, shorter noses, more prominent chins, and lips of a fuller and more voluptuous mould."

"Still we can't be certain how much of all this may be owing to the mere mannerisms of successive schools of art," urged Müller, sticking manfully to his own opinion. "Where will you find a more decided mannerist than Holbein? And because he was the first portrait-painter of his day, was he not reproduced with all his faults of literalness and dryness by a legion of imitators? So with Sir Peter Lely, with Petitot, with Vandyck, with every great artist who painted kings and queens and court beauties. Then

again, a certain style of beauty becomes the rage, and a skilful painter flatters each fair sitter in turn by bringing up her features, or her expression, or the colour of her hair, as near as possible to the fashionable standard. And further, there is the dress of a period to be taken into account. Think of the family likeness that pervades the flowing wigs of the courts of Louis Quatorze and Charles the Second—see what powder did a hundred years ago to equalise mankind!"

Flandrin shook his head.

"Ingenious, *mon garçon*," said he; "ingenious, but unsound. The cut of a fair lady's bodice never yet altered the shape of her nose; neither was it the fashion of their furred surcoats that made Erasmus and Sir Thomas More as like as twins. What you call the 'mannerism' of Holbein is only his way of looking at his fellow-creatures. He and Sir Antonio More were the most faithful of portrait painters. They didn't know how to flatter. They painted exactly what they saw—no more, and no less; so that every head they have left us is a chapter in

the history of the Middle Ages. The race—depend on't—the race was unbeautiful; and not even the picturesque dress of the period (which, according to your theory, should have helped to make the wearers of it more attractive) could soften one jot of their plainness."

"I can't bring myself to believe that we were all so ugly—French, English, and Germans alike—only a couple of centuries ago," said Müller.

"That is to say, you prefer to believe that Holbein, and Lucas Cranach, and Sir Antonio More, and all their school, were mannerists. Nonsense, my dear fellow—nonsense! *It is Nature who is the mannerist.* She loves to turn out a certain generation after a particular pattern; and when she is tired of that pattern, she invents another. Her fancies last, on the average, about a hundred years. Sometimes she changes the type quite abruptly; sometimes modifies it by gentle, yet always perceptible, degrees. And who shall say what her secret processes are? Education, travel, in-

termarriage with foreigners, the introduction of new kinds of food, the adoption of new habits, may each and all have something to do with these successive changes; but of one point at least we may be certain —and that is, that we painters are not responsible for her caprices. Our mission is to interpret Dame Nature more or less faithfully, according to our powers; but beyond interpretation we cannot go. And now (for you know I am as full of speculations as an experimental philosopher) I will tell you another conclusion I have come to with regard to this subject; and that is that national types were less distinctive in mediæval times than in ours. The French, English, Flemish, and Dutch of the Middle Ages, as we see them in their portraits, are curiously alike in all outward characteristics. The courtiers of Francis the First and their dames, and the lords and ladies of the court of Henry the Eighth, resemble each other as people of one nation. Their features are, as it were, cast in one mould. So also with the courts of Louis Quatorze and Charles

the Second. As for the regular French face of to-day, with its broad cheek-bones and high temples running far up into the hair on either side, that type does not make its appearance till close upon the advent of the Reign of Terror. But enough! I shall weary you with theories, and wear out the patience of our friend Guichet, who is sufficiently tired already with waiting for a head that never comes to be cut off as it ought. Adieu—adieu. Come soon again, and see how I get on with Marshal Romero."

Thus dismissed, we took our leave and left the painter to his work.

"An extraordinary man!" said Müller, as we passed out again through the neglected garden and paused for a moment to look at some half-dozen fat gold and silver fish that were swimming lazily about the little pond. "A man made up of contradictions —abounding in energy, yet at the same time the dreamiest of speculators. An original thinker, too; but wanting that basis which alone makes original thinking of any permanent value."

"But," said I, "he is evidently an educated man."

"Yes—educated as most artists are educated; but Flandrin has as strong a bent for science as for art, and deserved something better. Five years at a German university would have made of him one of the most remarkable men of his time. What did you think of his theory of faces?"

"I know nothing of the subject, and cannot form a judgment; but it sounded as if it might be true."

"Yes—just that. It may be true, and it may not. If true, then for my own part I should like to pursue his theory a step further, and trace the operation of these secret processes by means of which I am, happily, such a much better-looking fellow than my great-great-great-great grandfather of two hundred years ago. What, for instance, has the introduction of the potato done for the noses of mankind?"

Chatting thus, we walked back as far as the corner of the Rue Racine, where we

parted; I to attend a lecture at the Ecole de Medicine, and Müller to go home to his studio in the Rue Clovis.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *Returned with Thanks.*

A WEEK or two had thus gone by since the dreadful evening at the Opera Comique, and all this time I had neither seen nor heard more of the fair Josephine. My acquaintance with Franz Müller and the life of the Quartier Latin had, on the contrary, progressed rapidly. Just as the affair of the Opera had dealt a final blow to my romance *à la grisette* on the one hand, so had the excursion to Courbevoie, the visit to the Ecole de Natation, and the adventure of the Café Procope, fostered my intimacy with the artist on the other. We were both young, somewhat short of money, and brimful of fun. Each, too, had a cer-

tain substratum of earnestness underlying the mere surface-gaiety of his character. Müller was enthusiastic for art; I for poetry; and both for liberty. I fear, when I look back upon them, that we talked a deal of nonsense about Brutus, and the Rights of Man, and the noble savage, and all that sort of thing, in those hot-headed days of our youth. It was a form of political measles that the young men of that time were quite as liable to as the young men of our own; and, living as we then were in the heart of the most revolutionary city in Europe, I do not well see how we could have escaped the infection. Müller (who took it worse than I did, and was very rabid indeed when I first knew him) belonged just then not only to the honourable brotherhood of Les Chicards, but also to a small debating club that met twice a week in a private room at the back of an obscure Estaminet in the Rue de la Harpe. The members of this club were mostly art-students, and some, like himself, Chicards—generous, turbulent, high-spirited boys, with

more enthusiasm than brains, and a flow of words wholly out of proportion to the bulk of their ideas. As I came to know him more intimately, I used sometimes to go there with Müller, after our cheap dinner in the Quartier and our evening stroll along the Boulevards or the Champs Elysées; and I am bound to admit that I never, before or since, heard quite so much nonsense of the declamatory sort as on those memorable occasions. I did not think it nonsense then, however. I admired it with all my heart; applauded the nursery eloquence of these sucking Mirabeaus and Camille Desmoulins as frantically as their own vanity could desire; and was even secretly chagrined that my own French was not yet fluent enough to enable me to take part in their discussions.

In the meanwhile, my debts were paid; and, having dropped out of society when I fell out of love with Madame de Marignan, I no longer overspent my allowance. I bought no more bouquets, paid for no more opera-stalls, and hired no more prancing steeds at seven francs the hour. I bade

adieu to picture-galleries, flower-shows, morning concerts, dress boots, white kid gloves, elaborate shirt-fronts, and all the vanities of the fashionable world. In a word, I renounced the Faubourg St. Germain for the Quartier Latin, and applied myself to such work and such pleasures as pertained to the locality. If, after a long day at Dr. Chéron's, or the Hotel Dieu, or the Ecole de Medicine, I did waste a few hours now and then, I, at least, wasted them cheaply. Cheaply, but oh, so pleasantly! Ah me! those nights at the debating club, those evenings at the Chicards, those student's balls at the Chaumière, those third-class trips to Versailles and Fontainebleau, those one-franc pit seats at the Gaîeté and the Palais Royale, those little suppers at Pompon's and Flicoteau's—how delightful they were! How joyous! How free from care! And even when we made up a party and treated the ladies (for to treat the ladies is *de rigueure* in the code of Quartier Latin etiquette) how little it still cost, and what a world of merriment we had for the money!

It was well for me, too, and a source of much inward satisfaction, that my love-affair with Mademoiselle Josephine had faded and died a natural death. We never made up that quarrel of the Opera Comique, and I had not desired that we should make it up. On the contrary, I was exceedingly glad of the opportunity of withdrawing my attentions; so I wrote her a polite little note in which I expressed my regret that our tastes were so dissimilar and our paths in life so far apart; wished her every happiness; assured her that I should ever remember her with friendly regard; and signed my name with a tremendous flourish at the bottom of the second page. With the note, however, I sent her a raised pie and a red and green shawl, of which I begged her acceptance in token of amity; and as neither of those gifts was returned, I concluded that she ate the one and wore the other, and that there was peace between us.

But the scales of fortune as they go up for one, go down for another. This man's luck is balanced by that man's ruin—Orestes

falls sick, and Pylades returns from Kissengen cured of his lumbago—old Crœsus dies, and little Miss Kilmansegg comes into the world with a golden spoon in her mouth. So it fell out with Franz Müller and myself. As I happily steered clear of Charybdis, he drifted into Scylla—in other words, just as I recovered from my second attack of the tender passion, he caught the epidemic and fancied himself in love with the fair Marie.

I say "fancied," because his way of falling in love was so unlike my way, that I could scarcely believe it to be the same complaint. It affected neither his appetite, nor his spirits, nor his wardrobe. He made as many puns and smoked as many pipes as usual. He did not even buy a new hat. If, in fact, he had not told me himself, I should never have guessed that anything whatever was the matter with him.

It came out one day when he was pressing me to go with him to a certain tea-party at Madame Marotte's, in the Rue St. Denis.

"You see," said he, "it is *la petite* Marie's

fête; and the party's in her honour; and they'd be so proud if we both went to it: and—and, upon my soul, I'm awfully fond of that little girl" ....

"Of Marie Marotte?"

He nodded.

"You are not serious," I said.

"I am as serious," he replied, "as a dancing dervish."

And then, for I suppose I looked incredulous, he went on to justify himself.

"She's very good," he said, "and very pretty. Quite a Madonna face, to my thinking."

"You may see a dozen such Madonna faces among the nurses in the Luxembourg Gardens, every afternoon of your life," said I.

"Oh, if you come to that, every woman is like every other woman, up to a certain point."

"*Le femmes se suivent et se ressemblent toujours*," said I, parodying a well-known apothegm.

"Precisely, but then they wear their rue,

or cause you to wear yours, 'with a difference.' This girl, however, escapes the monotony of her sex by one or two peculiarities:—she has not a bit of art about her, nor a shred of coquetry. She is as simple and as straightforward as an Arcadian. She doesn't even know when she is being made love to, or understand what you mean, when you pay her a compliment."

"Then she's a phenomenon—and what man in his senses would fall in love with a phenomenon?"

"Every man, *mon cher enfant*, who falls in love at all! The woman we worship is always a phenomenon, whether of beauty, or grace, or virtue—till we find her out; and then, probably, she becomes a phenomenon of deceit, or slovenliness, or bad temper! And now, to return to the point we started from—will you go with me to Madame Marotte's tea-party to-morrow evening at eight? Don't say 'No,' there's a good fellow."

"I'll certainly not say No, if you particularly want me to say Yes," I replied, "but—"

"Prythee, no buts! Let it be Yes, and the thing is settled. So—here we are. Won't you come in and smoke a pipe with me? I've a bottle of capital Rhenish in the cupboard."

We had met near the Odéon, and, as our roads lay in the same direction, had gone on walking and talking till we came to Müller's own door in the Rue Clovis. I accepted the invitation, and followed him in. The *portière*, a sour-looking, bent old woman with a very dirty duster tied about her head, hobbled out from her little dark den at the foot of the stairs, and handed him the key of his apartment.

"*Tiens!*" said she, "wait a moment—there's a parcel for you, M'sieur Müller."

And so, hobbling back again, she brought out a small flat brown paper packet sealed at both ends.

"Ah, I see—from the Emperor!" said Müller. "Did he bring it himself, Madame Duphôt, or did he send it by the Archbishop of Paris?"

A faint grin flitted over the little old woman's withered face.

"Get along with you, M'sieur Müller," she said. "You're always playing the *farceur!* The parcel was brought by a man who looked like a stonemason."

"And nobody has called?"

"Nobody, except M'sieur Richard."

"Monsieur Richard's visits are always gratifying and delightful—may the *diable* fly away with him!" said Müller. "What did dear Monsieur Richard want to-day, Madame Duphôt?"

"He wanted to see you, and the third-floor gentleman also—about the rent."

"Dear Richard! What an admirable memory he has for dates! Did he leave any message, Madame Duphôt?"

The old woman looked at me, and hesitated.

"He says, M'sieur Müller—he says . . . ."

"Nay, this gentleman is a friend—you may speak out. What does our beloved and respected *propriétaire* say, Madame Duphôt?"

"He says, if you don't both of you pay up the arrears by midday on Sunday next, he'll seize your goods, and turn you into the street."

"Ah, I always said he was the nicest man I knew!" observed Müller, gravely. "Anything else, Madame Duphôt?"

"Only this, M'sieur Müller—that if you didn't go quietly, he'd take your windows out of the frames and your doors off the hinges."

"*Comment!* He bade you give me that message, the miserable old son of a spider! *Quatre vingt mille plâts de diables aux truffes!* Take my windows out of the frames, indeed! Let him try, Madame Duphôt—that's all—let him try!"

And with this, Müller, in a towering rage, led the way upstairs, muttering volleys of the most extraordinary and eccentric oaths of his own invention, and leaving the little old *portière* grinning maliciously in the hall.

"But can't you pay him?" said I.

"Whether I can, or can't, it seems I must," he replied, kicking open the door of his

studio as viciously as if it were the corporeal frame of Monsieur Richard. "The only question is—how? At the present moment, I haven't five francs in the till."

"Nor have I more than twenty. How much is it?"

"A hundred and sixty—worse luck!"

"Haven't the Tapottes paid for any of their ancestors yet?"

"Confound it!—yes; they've paid for a Marshal of France and a Farmer General, which are all I've yet finished and sent home. But there was the washerwoman, and the *traiteur*, and the artist's colourman, and, *enfin*, the devil to pay—and the money's gone, somehow!"

"I've only just cleared myself from a lot of debts," I said, ruefully, "and I daren't ask either my father or Doctor Chéron for an advance just at present. What is to be done?"

"Oh, I don't know. I must raise the money somehow. I must sell something—there's my copy of Titian's 'Pietro Aretino.' It's worth eighty francs, if only for a

sign. And there's a Madonna and Child after Andrea del Sarto, worth a fortune to any enterprising sage-femme with artistic proclivities. I'll try what Nebuchadnezzar will do for me."

"And who, in the name of all that's Israelitish, is Nebuchadnezzar?"

"Nebuchadnezzar, my dear Arbuthnot, is a worthy Shylock of my acquaintance—a gentleman well known to Bohemia—one who buys and sells whatever is purchaseable and saleable on the face of the globe, from a ship of war to a comic paragraph in the *Charivari*. He deals in bric-à-brac, sermons, government sinecures, pugs, false hair, light literature, patent medicines, and the fine arts. He lives in the Place des Victoires. Would you like to be introduced to him?"

"Immensely."

"Well, then, be here by eight to-morrow morning, and I'll take you with me. After nine he goes out, or is only visible to buyers. Here's my bottle of Rhenish—genuine Assmanshauser. Are you hungry?"

I admitted that I was not unconscious of a sensation akin to appetite.

He gazed stedfastly into the cupboard, and shook his head.

"A box of sardines," he said, gloomily, "nearly empty. Half a loaf, evidently disinterred from Pompeii. An inch of Lyons sausage, saved from the ark; the remains of a bottle of fish sauce, and a pot of currant jelly. What will you have?"

I decided for the relics of Pompeii and the deluge, and we sat down to discuss those curious delicacies. Having no corkscrew, we knocked off the neck of the bottle, and being short of glasses, drank our wine out of teacups.

"But you have never opened your parcel all this time," I said presently. "It may be full of *billets de banque*—who can tell?"

"That's true," said Müller; and broke the seals.

"By all the Gods of Olympus!" he shouted, holding up a small oblong volume bound in dark green cloth. "My sketch-book!"

He opened it, and a slip of paper fell out.

On this slip of paper were written, in a very neat, small hand, the words, "*Returned with thanks;*" but the page that contained the sketch made in the Café Procope was missing.

## CHAPTER XV.

*An Evening Party among the Petit Bourgeoisie.*

MADAME MAROTTE, as I have already mentioned more than once, lived in the Rue du Faubourg St. Denis; which, as all the world knows, is a prolongation of the Rue St. Denis—just as the Rue St. Denis was, in my time, a transpontine continuation of the old Rue de la Harpe. Beginning at the Place du Châtelet as the Rue St. Denis, opening at its farther end on the Boulevart St. Denis and passing under the triumphal arch of Louis le Grand (called the Porte St. Denis), it there becomes first the Rue du Faubourg St. Denis, and then the interminable Grande Route de St. Denis which drags its slow length along

all the way to the famous Abbey outside Paris.

The Rue du Faubourg St. Denis is a changed street now, and widens out, prim, white, and glittering, towards the new barrier and the new Rond Point. But in the dear old days of which I tell, it was the sloppiest, worst-paved, worst-lighted, noisiest, narrowest, and most crowded of all the great Paris thoroughfares north of the Seine. All the country traffic from Chantilly and Compiégne came lumbering this way into the city; diligences, omnibuses, waggons, fiacres, water-carts, and all kinds of vehicles thronged and blocked the street perpetually; and the sound of wheels ceased neither by night nor by day. The foot-pavements of the Rue du Faubourg St. Denis, too, were always muddy, be the weather what it might; and the gutters were always full of stagnant pools. An ever-changing, never-failing stream of rustics from the country, workpeople from the factories of the *banlieu*, grisettes, commercial travellers, porters, commissionaires, and *gamins* of all ages here flowed to and fro.

Itinerant vendors of cakes, lemonade, cocoa, chickweed, *allumettes*, pincushions, six-bladed penknives, and never-pointed pencils filled the air with their cries, and made both day and night hideous. You could not walk a dozen yards at any time without falling down a yawning cellar-trap, or being run over by a porter with a huge load upon his head, or getting splashed from head to foot by the sudden pulling-up of some cart in the gutter beside you.

It was among the peculiarities of the Rue du Faubourg St. Denis that everybody was always in a hurry, and that nobody was ever seen to look in at the shop-windows. The shops, indeed, might as well have had no windows, since there were no loungers to profit by them. Every house, nevertheless, was a shop, and every shop had its window. These windows, however, were for the most part of that kind before which the passer-by rarely cares to linger; for the commerce of the Rue du Faubourg St. Denis was of that steady, unpretending, money-making sort that despises mere shop-front attractions.

Grocers, stationers, corn-chandlers, printers, cutlers, leather-sellers, and such other inelegant trades, here most did congregate; and to the wearied wayfarer toiling along the dead level of this dreary pavé, it was quite a relief to come upon even an artistically-arranged *Magasin de Charcuterie*, with its rows of glazed tongues, mighty Lyons sausages, yellow *terrines* of Strasbourg pies, fantastically shaped pickle-jars, and pyramids of silvery sardine boxes.

It was at number One Hundred and Two in this agreeable thoroughfare that my friend's innamorata resided with her maternal aunt, the worthy relict of Monsieur Jacques Marotte, umbrella-maker, deceased. Thither, accordingly, we wended our miry way, Müller and I, after dining together at one of our accustomed haunts on the evening following the events related in my last chapter. The day had been dull and drizzly, and the evening had turned out duller and more drizzly still. We had not had rain for some time, and the weather had been (as it often is in Paris in October) oppressively hot; and

now that the rain had come, it did not seem to cool the air at all, but rather to load it with vapours, and make the heat less endurable than before.

Having toiled all the way up from the Rue de la Harpe on the farther bank of the Seine, and having forded the passage of the Arch of Louis le Grand, we were very wet and muddy indeed, very much out of breath, and very melancholy objects to behold.

"It's dreadful to think of going into any house in this condition, Müller," said I, glancing down ruefully at the state of my boots, and having just received a copious spattering of mud all down the left side of my person. "What is to be done!"

"We've only to go to a boot-cleaning and brushing-up shop," replied Müller. "There's sure to be one closé by somewhere."

"A boot-cleaning and brushing-up shop!" I echoed.

"What—didn't you know there were lots of them, all over Paris? Have you never noticed places that look like shops, with ground glass windows instead of shop-fronts,

on which are painted up the words, '*cirage des bottes*?' "

"Never, that I can remember."

"Then be grateful to me for a piece of very useful information! Suppose we turn down this by-street—it's mostly to the seclusion of by-streets and passages that our bashful sex retires to renovate its boots and its broadcloth."

I followed him, and in the course of a few minutes we found the sort of place of which we were in search. It consisted of one large, long room, like a shop without goods, counters, or shelves. A single narrow bench ran all round the walls, raised on a sort of wooden platform about three feet in width and three feet from the ground. Seated upon this bench, somewhat uncomfortably, as it seemed, with their backs against the wall, sat some ten or a dozen men and boys, each with an attendant shoeblack kneeling before him, brushing away vigorously. Two or three other customers, standing up in the middle of the shop, like horses in the hands of the groom, were hav-

ing their coats brushed instead of their boots. Of those present, some looked like young shopmen, some were of the *ouvrier* class, and one or two looked like respectable small tradesmen and fathers of families. The younger men were evidently smartening up for an hour or two at some cheap ball or Café-Concert, now that the warehouse was closed, and the day's work was over.

Our boots being presently brought up to the highest degree of polish, and our garments cleansed of every disfiguring speck, we paid a few sous apiece and turned out again into the streets. Happily, we had not far to go. A short cut brought us into the midst of the Rue de Faubourg St. Denis, and within a few yards of a gloomy-looking little shop with the words "*Veuve Marotte*" painted up over the window, and a huge red and white umbrella dangling over the door. A small boy in a shiny black apron was at that moment putting up the shutters; the windows of the front room over the shop were brightly lit from within; and a little old gentleman in goloshes and a large blue cloak

with a curly collar, was just going in at the private door. We meekly followed him, and hung up our hats and overcoats, as he did, in the passage.

"After you, Messieurs," said the little old gentleman, skipping politely back, and flourishing his hand in the direction of the stairs. "After you!"

We protested vehemently against this arrangement, and fought quite a skirmish of civilities at the foot of the stairs.

"I am at home here, Messieurs," said the little old gentleman, who, now that he was divested of hat, cloak, and goloshes, appeared in a flaxen *toupet*, an antiquated blue coat with brass buttons, a profusely frilled shirt, and low-cut shoes with silver buckles. "I am an old friend of the family—a friend of fifty years. I hold myself privileged to to do the honours, Messieurs:—a friend of fifty years may claim to have his privileges!"

With this he smirked, bowed, and backed against the wall, so that we were obliged to precede him. When we reached the land-

ing, however, he (being evidently an old gentleman of uncommon politeness and agility) sprang forward, held open the door for us, and insisted on ushering us in.

It was a narrow, long-shaped room, the size of the shop, with two windows looking upon the street; a tiny square of carpet in the middle of the floor; boards highly waxed and polished; a tea-table squeezed up in one corner; a somewhat ancient-looking, spindle-legged cottage piano behind the door; a mirror and an ornamental clock over the mantelpiece; and a few French lithographs coloured in imitation of crayon-drawings, hanging against the walls.

Madame Marotte, very deaf and fussy in a cap with white ribbons, came forward to receive us. Mademoiselle Marie, sitting between two other young women of her own age, hung her head, and took no notice of our arrival.

The rest of the party consisted of a gentleman and two old ladies. The gentleman (a plump, black-whiskered elderly Cupid, with a vast expanse of shirt-front like an

immense white ace of hearts, and a rose in his button-hole) was standing on the hearth-rug in a graceful attitude, with one hand resting on his hip, and the other under his coat-tails. Of the two old ladies, who seemed as if expressly created by nature to serve as foils to one another, one was very fat and rosy, in a red silk gown and a kind of black velvet hat trimmed with white marabout feathers and Roman pearls; while the other was tall, gaunt and pale, with a long nose, a long upper lip, and supernaturally long yellow teeth. She wore a black gown, black cotton gloves, and a black velvet band across her forehead, fastened in the centre with a black and gold clasp containing a ghastly representation of a human eye, apparently purblind—which gave this lady the air of a serious Cyclops.

Madame Marotte was profuse of thanks, welcomes, apologies and curtseys. It was so good of these gentlemen to come so far—and in such unpleasant weather, too! But would not these Messieurs give themselves the trouble to be seated? And would they

prefer tea or coffee—for both were on the table? And where was Marie? Marie, whose *fête*-day it was, and who should have come forward to welcome these gentlemen, and thank them for the honour of their company!

Thus summoned, Mademoiselle Marie emerged from between the two young women, and curtsied demurely.

In the meanwhile, the little old gentleman who had ushered us in was bustling about the room, shaking hands with everyone, and complimenting the ladies.

"Ah, Madame Desjardins," he said, addressing the stout lady in the hat, "enchanted to see you back from the sea-side!—you and your charming daughter. I do not know which looks the more young and blooming."

Then, turning to the grim lady in black:—

"And I am charmed to pay my homage to Madame de Mont Parnasse. I had the pleasure of being present at the brilliant *début* of Madame's gifted daughter the other evening at the private performance of the

pupils of the Conservatoire. Mademoiselle Honoria inherits the *grande air*, Madame, from yourself."

Then, to the plump gentleman with the shirt-front:—

"And Monsieur Philomène!—this is indeed a privilege and a pleasure. Bad weather, Monsieur Philomène, for the voice!"

Then, to the two girls:

"Mesdemoiselles—Achille Dorinet prostrates himself at the feet of youth, beauty, and talent! Mademoiselle Honoria, I salute in you the future Empress of the tragic-stage. Mademoiselle Rosalie, modesty forbids me to extol the acquired graces of even my most promising pupil; but I may be permitted to adore in you the graces of nature."

While I was listening to these scraps of salutation, Müller was murmuring tender nothings in the ear of the fair Marie, and Madame Marotte was pouring out the coffee.

Monsieur Achille Dorinet, having gone the

round of the company, next addressed himself to me.

"Permit me, Monsieur," he said, bringing his heels together and punctuating his sentences with little bows, "permit me, in the absence of a master of the ceremonies, to introduce myself—Achille Dorinet. Achille Dorinet, whose name may not, perhaps, be wholly unknown to you in connection with the past glories of the classical ballet. Achille Dorinet, formerly *premier sujet* of the Opera Français—now principal choreographic professor at the Conservatoire Impériale de Musique. I have had the honour, Monsieur, of dancing at Erfurth before their Imperial Majesties the Emperors Napoleon and Alexander, and a host of minor sovereigns. Those, Monsieur, were the high and palmy days of the art. We performed a ballet descriptive of the siege of Troy, and I undertook the part of a river god—the god Scamander, *en effet*. The great ladies of the court, Monsieur, were graciously pleased to admire my proportions as the god Scamander. I wore a girdle of sedges,

a wreath of water-lilies, and a scarf of blue and silver. I have reason to believe that the costume became me."

"Sir," I replied gravely, "I do not doubt it."

"It is a noble art, Monsieur, *l'art de la danse*," said the former *premier sujet*, with a sigh; "but it is on the decline. Of the grand style of fifty years ago, only myself and tradition remain."

"Monsieur was, doubtless, a contemporary of Vestris, the famous dancer," I said.

"The illustrious Vestris, Monsieur," said the little old gentleman, "was, next to Louis the Fourteenth, the greatest of Frenchmen. I am proud to own myself his disciple, as well as his contemporary."

"Why next to Louis the Fourteenth, Monsieur Dorinet?" I asked, keeping my countenance with difficulty. "Why not next to Napoleon the First, who was a still greater conqueror?"

"But no dancer, Monsieur!" replied the ex-god Scamander, with a kind of half pirouette; "whereas the Grand Mon-

arque was the finest dancer of his epoch."

Madame Marotte had by this time supplied all her guests with tea and coffee, while Monsieur Philomène went round with the cakes and bread and butter. Madame Desjardins spread her pocket-handkerchief on her lap—a pocket-handkerchief the size of a small table-cloth. Madame de Montparnasse, more mindful of her gentility, removed to a corner of the tea-table, and ate her bread and butter in her black cotton gloves.

"We hope we have another bachelor by-and-by," said Madame Marotte, addressing herself to the young ladies, who looked down and giggled. "A charming man, mesdemoiselles, and quite the gentleman—our *locataire*, M'sieur Lenoir. You know him, M'sieur Dorinet—pray tell these demoiselles what a charming man M'sieur Lenoir is!"

The little dancing-master bowed, coughed, smiled, and looked somewhat embarrassed.

"Monsieur Lenoir is no doubt a man of much information," he said, hesitatingly; "a

traveller—a reader—a gentleman—oh! yes, certainly a gentleman. But to say that he is a—a charming man . . . well, perhaps the ladies are the best judges of such nice questions. What says Mam'selle Marie?"

Thus applied to, the fair Marie became suddenly crimson, and had not a word to reply with. Monsieur Dorinet stared. The young ladies tittered. Madame Marotte, deaf as a post and serenely unconscious, smiled, nodded, and said "Ah, yes, yes—didn't I tell you so?"

"Monsieur Dorinet has, I fear, asked an indiscreet question," said Müller, boiling over with jealousy.

"I—I have not observed Monsieur Lenoir sufficiently to—to form an opinion," faltered Marie, ready to cry with vexation.

Müller glared at her reproachfully, turned on his heel, and came over to where I was standing.

"You saw how she blushed?" he said in a fierce whisper. "*Sacredie!* I'll bet my head she's an arrant flirt. Who, in the name of all the fiends, is this lodger she's

been carrying on with? A lodger, too—oh! the artful puss!"

At this awkward moment, Monsieur Dorinet, with considerable tact, asked Monsieur Philomène for a song; and Monsieur Philomène (who as I afterwards learned was a favourite tenor at fifth-rate concerts) was graciously pleased to comply.

Not, however, without a little preliminary coquetry, after the manner of tenors. First he feared he was hoarse; then struck a note or two on the piano, and tried his falsetto; then asked for a glass of water; and finally begged that one of the young ladies would be so amiable as to accompany him.

Mademoiselle Honoria, inheriting rigidity from the maternal Cyclops, drew herself up and declined stiffly; but the other, whom the dancing-master had called Rosalie, got up directly and said she would do her best.

"Only," she added, blushing, "I play so badly!"

Monsieur Philomène was provided with two copies of his song—one for the accompanyist and one for himself; then, standing

well away from the piano with his face to the audience, he balanced his music in his hand, made his little professional bow, coughed, ran his fingers through his hair, and assumed an expression of tender melancholy.

"One—two—three," began Mdlle. Rosalie, her little fat fingers staggering helplessly among the first cadenzas of the symphony. "One—two—three. One" . . .

Monsieur Philomène interrupted with a wave of the hand, as if conducting an orchestra.

"Pardon, Mademoiselle," he said, "not quite so fast, if you please! Andantino—andantino—one—two—three . . . Just so! A thousand thanks!"

Again Mdlle. Rosalie attacked the symphony. Again Monsieur Philomène cleared his voice, and suffered a pensive languor to cloud his manly brow.

"*Revenez, revenez, beaux jours de mon enfance,*"

he began, in a small, tremulous, fluty voice.

"They'll have a long road to travel back, *parbleu!*" muttered Müller.

"*De votre aspect riant charmer mon souvenance!*"

Here Mdlle. Rosalie struck a wrong chord, became involved in hopeless difficulties, and gasped audibly.

Monsieur Philomène darted a withering glance at her, and went on:—

"*Mon cœur, mon pauvre cœur*" . . . .

More wrong chords, and a smothered "*mille pardons!*" from Mdlle. Rosalie.

"*Mon cœur, mon pauvre cœur à la tristesse en proie,*
*En fouillant le passé*" . . . .

A dead stop on the part of Mdlle. Rosalie.

"*En fouillant le passé*" . . . .

repeated the tenor, with the utmost severity of emphasis.

"*Mais, mon Dieu,* Rosalie! what are you doing?" cried Madame Desjardins, angrily. "Why don't you go on?"

Mdlle. Rosalie burst into a flood of tears.

"I—I can't!" she sobbed. "It's so—so very difficult—and" . . . .

Madame Desjardins flung up her hands in despair.

"*Ciel!*" she cried, "and I have been pay-

ing three francs a lesson for you, Mademoiselle, twice a week for the last six years!"

"*Mais, maman*" . . . .

"*Fi donc*, Mademoiselle! I am ashamed of you. Make a curtsey to Monsieur Philomène this moment, and beg his pardon; for you have spoiled his beautiful song!"

But Monsieur Philomène would hear of no such expiation. His soul, to use his own eloquent language, recoiled from it with horror! The accompaniment, *à vrai dire*, was not easy, and *la bien aimable* Mam'selle Rosalie had most kindly done her best with it. *Allons donc!*—on condition that no more should be said on the subject, Monsieur Philomène would volunteer to sing a little unaccompanied romance of his own composition—a mere *bagatelle;* but a tribute to "*les beaux yeux de ces chères dames!*"

So Mam'selle Rosalie wiped away her tears, and Madame Desjardins smoothed her ruffled feathers, and Monsieur Philomène warbled a plaintive little ditty in which "*cœur*" rhymed to "*peur*," and "*amours*" to "*toujours*," and "*le sort*" to "*la mort*" in quite the usual way;

so giving great satisfaction to all present, but most, perhaps, to himself.

And now, hospitably anxious that each of her guests should have a chance of achieving distinction, Madame Marotte invited Mdlle. Honoria to favour the company with a dramatic recitation.

Mdlle. Honoria hesitated; exchanged glances with the Cyclops; and, in order to enhance the value of her performance, began raising all kinds of difficulties. There was no stage, for instance; and there were no footlights; but M. Dorinet met these objections by proposing to range all the seats at one end of the room, and to divide the stage off by a row of lighted candles.

"But it is so difficult to render a dramatic scene without an interlocutor!" said the young lady.

"What is it you require, *ma chère demoiselle?*" asked Madame Marotte.

"I have no interlocutor," said Mdlle. Honoria.

"No what, my love?"

"No interlocutor," repeated Mdlle. Honoria, at the top of her voice.

"Dear! dear! what a pity! Can't we send the boy for it? Marie, my child, bid Jacques run to Madame de Montparnasse's *appartement* in the Rue" . . . .

But Madame Marotte's voice was lost in the confusion; for Monsieur Dorinet was already deep in the arrangement of the room, and we were all helping to move the furniture. As for Mademoiselle's last difficulty, the little dancing-master met that by offering to read whatever was necessary to carry on the scene.

And now, the stage being cleared, the audience placed, and Monsieur Dorinet provided with a volume of Corneille, Mademoiselle Honoria proceeded to drape herself in an old red shawl belonging to Madame Marotte.

The scene selected is the fifth of the fourth act of Horace, where Camille, meeting her only surviving brother, upbraids him with the death of Curiace.

Mam'selle Honoria, as Camille, with clasped

hands and tragic expression, stalks in a slow and stately manner towards the footlights.

(Breathless suspense of the audience.)

M. Dorinet, who should begin by vaunting his victory over the Curiatii, stops to put on his glasses, finds it difficult to read with all the candles on the ground, and mutters something about the smallness of the type.

Mdlle. Honoria, not to keep the audience waiting, surveys the ex-God Scamander with a countenance expressive of horror; starts; and takes a turn across the stage.

"*Ma sœur*," begins M. Dorinet, holding the book very much on one side, so as to catch the light upon the page, "*ma sœur, voici le bras*" . . . .

"Ah, heaven! my dear Mademoiselle, take care of the candles!" cries Madame Marotte in a shrill whisper.

. . . . "*le bras qui venge nos deux frères,*
*Le bras qui rompt le cours de nos destins contraires,*
*Qui nous rend*" . . . .

Here he lost his place; stammered; and recovered it with difficulty.

"*Qui nous rend maîtres d'Albe*" . . . .

Madame Marotte groans aloud in an agony of apprehension.

"*Ah, mon Dieu!*" she exclaims, gaspingly, "if they didn't flare so, it wouldn't be half so dangerous!"

Here M. Dorinet dropped his book, and stooping to pick up the book, dropped his spectacles.

"I think," said Mdlle. Honoria, indignantly, "we had better begin again. Monsieur Dorinet, pray read with the help of a candle, *this* time!"

And, with an angry toss of her head, Mdlle. Honoria went up the stage, put on her tragedy face again, and prepared once more to stalk down to the footlights.

Monsieur Dorinet, in the meanwhile, had snatched up a candle, readjusted his spectacles, and found his place.

"*Ma sœur*," he began again, holding the book close to his eyes and the candle just under his nose, and nodding vehemently with every emphasis:—

"*Ma sœur, voici le bras qui venge nos deux frères,*
*Le bras qui rompt le cours de nos destins contraires,*
*Qui nous rend maîtres d'Albe*" . . . ."

A piercing scream from Madame Marotte, a general cry on the part of the audience, and a strong smell of burning, brought the dancing-master to a sudden stop. He looked round, bewildered.

"Your wig! Your wig's on fire!" cried every one at once.

Monsieur Dorinet clapped his hand to his head, which was now adorned with a rapidly-spreading glory; burned his fingers; and cut a frantic caper.

"Save him! save him!" yelled Madame Marotte.

But almost before the words were out of her mouth, Müller, clearing the candles at a bound, had rushed to the rescue, scalped Monsieur Dorinet by a *tour de main*, cast the blazing wig upon the floor, and trampled out the fire.

Then followed a roar of "inextinguishable laughter," in which, however, neither the tragic Camille nor the luckless Horace joined.

"Heavens and earth!" murmured the little dancing-master, ruefully surveying the ruins of his blonde peruke. And then he put his hand to his head, which was as bald as an egg.

In the meanwhile Mdlle. Honoria, who had not yet succeeded in uttering a syllable of her part, took no pains to dissemble her annoyance; and was only pacified at last by a happy proposal on the part of Monsieur Philomène, who suggested that "this gifted demoiselle" should be entreated to favour the society with a soliloquy.

Thus invited, she draped herself again, stalked down to the footlights for the third time, and in a high, shrill voice, with every variety of artificial emphasis and studied gesture, recited Voltaire's famous "Death of Coligny," from the *Henriade.*

In the midst of this performance, just at that point when the assassins are described as falling upon their knees before their victim, the door of the room was softly opened, and another guest slipped in unseen behind us. Slipped in, indeed, so quietly

that (the backs of the audience being turned that way) no one seemed to hear, and no one looked round but myself.

Brief as was that glaace, and all in the shade as he stood, I recognized him instantly.

It was the mysterious stranger of the Café Procope.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *My Aunt's Flower Garden.*

HAVING despatched the venerable Coligny much to her own satisfaction and apparently to the satisfaction of her hearers, Mdlle. Honoria returned to private life; Messieurs Philomène and Dorinet removed the footlights; the audience once more dispersed itself about the room; and Madame Marotte welcomed the newcomer as Monsieur Lenoir.

"*Monsieur est bien aimable,*" she said, nodding and smiling, and, with tremulous hands, smoothing down the front of her black silk gown. "I had told these young ladies that we hoped for the honour of Monsieur's society. Will Monsieur permit me to introduce him?"

"With pleasure, Madame Marotte."

And M. Lenoir—white cravatted, white-kid gloved, hat in hand, perfectly well-dressed in full evening black, and wearing a small orange-coloured rosette at his button-hole—bowed, glanced round the room, and, though his eyes undoubtedly took in both Müller and myself, looked as if he had never seen either of us in his life.

I saw Müller start, and the colour fly into his face.

"By heaven!" he exclaimed, "it is—it must be . . . look at him, Arbuthnot! If that isn't the man who stole my sketch-book, I'll eat my head!"

"It *is* the man," I replied. "I recognized him ten minutes ago, when he first came in."

"You are certain?"

"Quite certain."

"And yet—there is something different!"

There *was* something different; but, at the same time, much that was identical. There was the same strange, inscrutable look, the same bronzed complexion, the same military bearing. M. Lenoir, it was true, was well,

and even elegantly dressed; whereas the stranger of the Café Procope bore all the outward stigmata of penury; but that was not all. There was yet "something different." The one looked like a man who had done, or suffered, a wrong in his time; who had an old quarrel with the world; and who only sought to hide himself, his poverty, and his bitter pride from the observation of his fellow men. The other stood before us dignified, *décoré*, self-possessed, a man not only of the world, but apparently no stranger to that small section of it called "the great world." In a word, the man of the Café, sunken, sullen, threadbare as he was, would have been almost less out of his proper place in Madame Marotte's society of small tradespeople and minor professionals, than was M. Lenoir with his *grande air* and his orange-coloured ribbon.

"It's the same man," said Müller; "the same, beyond a doubt! The more I look at him, the more confident I am."

"And the more I look at him," said I, "the more doubtful I get."

Madame Marotte, meanwhile, had introduced M. Lenoir to the two Conservatoire pupils and their mammas; Monsieur Dorinet had proposed some "*petits jeux*;" and Monsieur Philomène was helping him to rearrange the chairs—this time in a circle.

"Take your places, Messieurs et Mesdames—take your places!" cried Monsieur Dorinet, who had by this time resumed his wig, singed as it was, and shorn of its fair proportions. "What game shall we play at?"

"*Pied de Bœuf*," "*Colin Maillard*," and other games were successively proposed and rejected.

"We have a game in Alsace called 'My Aunt's Flower Garden,'" said Müller. "Does anyone know it?"

"'My Aunt's Flower Garden?'" repeated Monsieur Dorinet. "I never heard of it."

"It sounds pretty," said Mdlle. Rosalie.

"Will M'sieur teach it to us, if it is not very difficult?" suggested Mdlle. Rosalie's mamma.

"With pleasure, Madame. It is not a bad game—and it is extremely easy. We

will sit in a circle, if you please—the chairs as they are placed will do quite well."

We were just about to take our places when Madame Marotte seized the opportunity to introduce Müller and myself to M. Lenoir.

"We have met before, Monsieur," said Müller, pointedly.

"I am ashamed to confess, Monsieur, that I do not remember to have had that pleasure," replied M. Lenoir, somewhat stiffly.

"And yet, Monsieur, it was but the other day," persisted Müller.

"Monsieur, I can but reiterate my regret."

"At the Café Procope."

M. Lenoir stared coldly, slightly shrugged his shoulders, and said, with the air of one who repudiates a discreditable charge :—

"Monsieur, I do not frequent the Café Procope."

"If Monsieur Müller is to teach us the game, Monsieur Müller must begin it!" said Monsieur Dorinet.

"At once," replied Müller, taking his place in the circle.

As ill-luck would have it (the rest of us being already seated) there were but two chairs left; so that M. Lenoir and Müller had to sit side by side.

"I begin with my left-hand neighbour," said Müller, addressing himself with a bow to Mdlle. Rosalie; "and the circle will please to repeat after me:—'I have the four corners of my Aunt's Flower Garden for sale—

'*In the first of these corners grows sweet mignonette;*
*I've seen thee, and lov'd thee, and ne'er can forget.*'"

MDLLE. ROSALIE *to* M. PHILOMÈNE.—I have the four corners of my Aunt's Flower Garden for sale—

'*In the first of these corners grows sweet mignonette;*
*I've seen thee, and lov'd thee, and ne'er can forget.*'

M. PHILOMÈNE *to* MADAME DE MONTPARNASSE.—I have the four corners of my Aunt's Flower Garden, etc., etc.

MADAME DE MONTPARNASSE *to* M. DORINET.—I have the four corners of my Aunt's Flower Garden, etc., etc.

Monsieur Dorinet repeats the formula to Madame Desjardins; Madame Desjardins

passes it on to me; I proclaim it at the top of my voice to Madame Marotte; Madame Marotte transfers it to Mdlle. Honoria; Mdlle. Honoria delivers it to the fair Marie; the fair Marie tells it to M. Lenoir, and the first round is completed.

Müller resumes the lead :—

"*In the second grow heartsease and wild eglantine;*
*Fair exchange is no theft—for my heart, give me thine.*"

MDLLE. ROSALIE *to* M. PHILOMÈNE :—

"*In the second grow heartsease and wild eglantine;*
*Fair exchange is no theft—for my heart, give me thine.*"

M. PHILOMÈNE TO MDLLE. DE MONTPARNASSE :—

"*In the second grow heartsease,*" *&c. &c.*

And so on again, till the second round is done.

Then Müller began again :—

"*In the third of these corners pale primroses grow;*
*Now tell me thy secret, and whisper it low.*"

Mdlle. Rosalie was about to repeat these lines as before; but he stopped her.

"No, Mademoiselle, not till you have told me the secret!"

"The secret, M'sieur! What secret?"

"Nay, Mademoiselle, how can I tell that till you have told me? You must whisper something to me—something very secret, which you would not wish anyone else to hear—before you repeat the lines. And when you repeat them, Monsieur Philomène must whisper his secret to you—and so on through the circle."

Mdlle. Rosalie hesitated, smiled, whispered something in Müller's ear, and went on with:—

"*In the third of these corners pale primroses grow;*
*Now tell me thy secret, and whisper it low.*"

Monsieur Philomène then whispered his secret to Mdlle. Rosalie, and so on again till it ended with M. Lenoir and Müller.

"I don't think it is a very amusing game," said Madame Marotte; who, being deaf, had been left out of the last round, and found it dull.

"It will be more entertaining presently, Madame," shouted Müller, with a malicious twinkle about his eyes. "Pray observe the next lines, Messieurs et Mesdames, and follow my lead as before:—

*'Roses bloom in the fourth; and your secret, my dear,*
*Which you whisper'd so softly just now in my ear,*
*I repeat word for word, for the others to hear!'*

Mademoiselle Rosalie (whose pardon I implore!) whispered to me that Monsieur Philomène dyed his moustache and whiskers."

There was a general murmur of alarm tempered with tittering. Mademoiselle Rosalie was dumb with confusion. Monsieur Philomène's face became the colour of a full-blown peony. Madame de Montparnasse and Mdlle. Honoria turned absolutely green.

"*Comment!*" exclaimed one or two voices. "Is everything to be repeated?"

"Everything, Messieurs et Mesdames," replied Müller—"everything—without reservation. I call upon Mdlle. Rosalie to reveal the secret of Monsieur Philomène."

MDLLE. ROSALIE *(with great promptitude)*: —Monsieur Philomène whispered to me that Honoria was the most disagreeable girl in Paris, Marie the dullest, and myself the prettiest.

M. Philomène (*in an agony of confusion*): —I beseech you, Mam'selle Honoria . . . I entreat you, Mam'selle Marie, not for an instant to suppose . . . .

Mdlle. Honoria (*drawing herself up and smiling acidly*):—Oh, pray do not give yourself the trouble to apologise, Monsieur Philomène. Your opinion, I assure you, is not of the least moment to either of us. Is it, Marie?

But the fair Marie only smiled good-naturedly, and said:—

"I know I am not clever. Monsieur Philomène is quite right; and I am not at all angry with him."

"But—but, indeed, Mesdemoiselles, I—I am incapable . . . ." stammered the luckless tenor, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "I am incapable . . . ."

"Silence in the circle!" cried Müller, authoritatively. "Private civilities are forbidden by the rules of the game. I call Monsieur Philomène to order, and I demand from him the secret of Madame de Montparnasse."

M. Philomène looked even more miserable than before.

"I—I . . . but it is an odious position! To betray the confidence of a lady . . . . Heavens! I cannot."

"The secret!—the secret!" shouted the others, impatiently.

Madame de Montparnasse pursed up her parchment lips, glared upon us defiantly, and said:—

"Pray don't hesitate about repeating *my* words, M'sieur Philomène. I am not ashamed of them."

M. Philomène *(reluctantly)*:—Madame de Montparnasse observed to me that what she particularly disliked was a mixed society like—like the present; and that she hoped our friend Madame Marotte would in future be less indiscriminate in the choice of her acquaintances.

Muller *(with elaborate courtesy)*:—We are all infinitely obliged to Madame de Montparnasse for her opinion of us—(I speak for the society, as leader of the circle)—and beg to assure her that we entirely coincide

in her views. It rests with Madame to carry on the game, and to betray the confidence of Monsieur Dorinet.

MADAME DE MONTPARNASSE:—*(with obvious satisfaction)*—Monsieur Dorinet told me that Rosalie Desjardin's legs were ill-made, and that she would never make a dancer, though she practised from now till doomsday.

M. DORINET: (*springing to his feet as if he had been shot*)—Heavens and earth! Madame de Montparnasse, what have I done that you should so pervert my words? Mam'-selle Rosalie—*ma chère elève*, believe me, I never . . . .

"Silence in the circle!" shouted Müller again.

M. DORINET:—But, M'sieur, in simple self-defence . . . .

MULLER:—Self-defence, Monsieur Dorinet, is contrary to the rules of the game. Revenge only is permitted. Revenge yourself on Madame Desjardins, whose secret it is your turn to tell.

M DORINET:—Madame Desjardins drew

my attention to the toilette of Madame de Montparnasse. She said: "*Mon Dieu!* Monsieur Dorinet, are you not tired of seeing La Montparnasse in that everlasting old black gown? My Rosalie says she is in mourning for her ugliness.

MADAME DESJARDINS: *(laughing heartily)* —*Eh bien—oui!* I don't deny it; and Rosalie's *môt* was not bad. And now, M'sieur the Englishman *(turning to me)*, it is your turn to be betrayed. Monsieur, whose name I cannot pronounce, said to me:— "Madame, the French, *selon moi*, are the best dressed and most *spirituel* people of Europe. Their very silence is witty; and if mankind were, by universal consent, to go without clothes to-morrow, they would wear the primitive costume of Adam and Eve more elegantly than the rest of the world, and still lead the fashion."

*(A murmur of approval on the part of the company, who take the compliment entirely au serieux.)*

MYSELF: *(agreeably conscious of having achieved popularity)*—Our hostess's deafness

having unfortunately excluded her from this part of the game, I was honoured with the confidence of Mdlle. Honoria, who informed me that she is to make her *débût* before long at the Theatre Français, and hoped that I would take tickets for the occasion.

MDLLE. ROSALIE: (*satirically*) — *Brava*, Honoria! What a woman of business you are!

MDLLE. HONORIA: *(affecting not to hear this observation)*—

> "*Roses bloom in the fourth, and your secret, my dear,*
> *Which you whispered so softly just now in my ear,*
> *I repeat word for word for the others to hear.*"

Marie said to me . . . . *Tiens!* Marie, don't pull my dress in that way. You shouldn't have said it, you know, if it won't bear repeating! Marie said to me that she could have either Monsieur Müller or Monsieur Lenoir, by only holding up her finger—but she couldn't make up her mind which she liked best.

MDLLE MARIE: *(half crying)*—Nay, Honoria—how can you be so—so unkind . . . so spiteful? I—I did not say I could have either M'sieur Müller or . . or . . . .

M. LENOIR: *(with great spirit and good breeding)*—Whether Mademoiselle used those words or not is of very little importance. The fact remains the same; and is as old as the world. Beauty has but to will and to conquer.

MULLER:—Order in the circle! The game waits for Mademoiselle Marie.

MARIE: *(hesitatingly)*—

"*Roses bloom in the fourth, and your secret*" . . .

M'sieur Lenoir said that—that he admired the colour of my dress, and that blue became me more than lilac.

MULLER: *(coldly)*—*Pardon*, Mademoiselle, but I happened to overhear what Monsieur Lenoir whispered just now, and those were not his words. Monsieur Lenoir said, "Look in" . . . . but perhaps Mademoiselle would prefer me not to repeat more?

MARIE:—*(in great confusion)*—As—as you please, M'sieur.

MULLER:—Then, Mademoiselle, I will be discreet, and I will not even impose a forfeit upon you, as I might do, by the laws of the game. It is for Monsieur Lenoir to continue.

M. LENOIR:—I do not remember what Monsieur Müller whispered to me at the close of the last round.

MULLER: *(pointedly)—Pardon*, Monsieur, I should have thought that scarcely possible.

M. LENOIR:—It was perfectly unintelligible, and therefore left no impression on my memory.

MULLER:—Permit me, then, to have the honour of assisting your memory. I said to you—"Monsieur, if I believed that any modest young woman of my acquaintance was in danger of being courted by a man of doubtful character, do you know what I would do? I would hunt that man down with as little remorse as a ferret hunts down a rat in a drain."

M. LENOIR:—The sentiment does you honour, Monsieur; but I do not see the application.

MULLER:—Vous ne le trouvez pas, Monsieur?

M. LENOIR:—*(with a cold stare, and a scarcely perceptible shrug of the shoulders)*—Non, Monsieur.

Here Mdlle. Rosalie broke in with:—"What are we to do next, M'sieur Müller? Are we to begin another round, or shall we start a fresh game?"

To which Müller replied that it must be "*selon le plaisir de ces dames;*" and put the question to the vote.

But too many plain, unvarnished truths had cropped up in the course of the last round of my Aunt's Flower Garden; and the ladies were out of humour. Madame de Montparnasse, frigid, Cyclopœan, black as Erebus, found that it was time to go home; and took her leave, bristling with gentility. The tragic Honoria stalked majestically after her. Madame Desjardins, mortally offended with M. Dorinet on the score of Rosalie's legs, also prepared to be gone; while M. Philomène, convicted of hair-dye and *brouillé* for ever with "the most disagreeable girl in Paris," hastened to make his adieux as brief as possible.

"A word in your ear, mon cher Dorinet," whispered he, catching the little dancing-master by the button-hole. "Isn't it the

most unpleasant party you were ever at in your life?"

The ex-God Scamander held up his hands and eyes.

"*Eh, mon Dieu!*" he replied. "What an evening of disasters! I have lost my best pupil and my second-best wig!"

In the meanwhile, we went up like the others, and said good night to our hostess.

She, good soul! in her deafness, knew nothing about the horrors of the evening, and was profuse of her civilities. "So amiable of these gentlemen to honour her little soirée—so kind of M'sieur Müller to have exerted himself to make things go off pleasantly—so sorry we would not stay half an hour longer," &c., &c.

To all of which Müller (with a sly grimace expressive of contrition) replied only by a profound salutation and a rapid retreat. Passing M. Lenoir without so much as a glance, he paused a moment before Mdlle. Marie who was standing near the door, and said in a tone audible only to her and myself:—

"I congratulate you, Mademoiselle, on your admirable talent for intrigue. I trust, when you look in the usual place and find the promised letter, it will prove agreeable reading. J'ai l'honneur, Mademoiselle, de vous saluer."

I saw the girl flush crimson, then turn deadly white, and draw back as if his hand had struck her a sudden blow. The next moment we were half-way down the stairs.

"What, in heaven's name, does all this mean?" I said, when we were once more in the street.

"It means," replied Müller fiercely, "that the man's a scoundrel, and the woman, like all other women, is false."

"Then the whisper you overheard" . . .

"Was only this:—'*Look in the usual place, and you will find a letter.*' Not many words, *mon cher;* but confoundedly comprehensive! And I who believed that girl to be an angel of candour! I who was within an ace of falling seriously in love with her! *Sacredie!* what an idiot I have been!"

"Forget her, my dear fellow," said I.

"Wipe her out of your memory (which I think will not be difficult) and leave her to her fate."

He shook his head.

"No," he said, gloomily, "I won't do that. I'll get to the bottom of that man's mystery; and if, as I suspect, there's that about his past life which won't bear the light of day—I'll save her, if I can."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON: PRINTED BY MACDONALD AND TUGWELL, BLENHEIM HOUSE